

IN THE VERDANT WEST
by
Chas. A. M. Press.





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VERDANT WEST.

BY
Charles
CHAS. A. M. *Manning* PRESS,
114

JOURNALIST AND AUTHOR.

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PREFACE.

IT is to be feared that there is only too much truth in the assertion that Englishmen know comparatively little of their own country ; and again and again is the unpleasant fact demonstrated, that those advantages and benefits which are the nearest at hand are by the majority of us the most neglected.

Abounding as the West of England does, in rich scenery, and notable and picturesque places, yet only a comparatively few people have visited them and revelled in the unique delights they offer. Even to very many persons actually living in the West not a few of the sylvan scenes and romantic spots surrounding them are unknown.

The object therefore aimed at in the publishing of this volume has been an attempt to do something towards leading the public to make

themselves better acquainted with the beautiful scenery so characteristic of the West by the depicting of SOME portions of it in original, and, what I hope will be found to be, bright and racy descriptive sketches. Stress is laid on the word "some" for the particular reason that had ALL the lovely spots of the West been described it would have necessitated the publication of more than one volume.

I have simply described those scenes and places which I have myself visited, and which have impressed me as being well worthy of mention in a work of this kind, and which, furthermore, I believe, will give a very fair idea of the scenic charms of the West Country. The sketch "From Exeter to Newton Abbott, Across the Haldon Hills," is from the gifted pen of Mr. Sydney H. Jarvis, a friend, who accompanied me on several of the rambles described in this book.

CHAS. A. M. PRESS.

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ON THE QUANTOCKS.



VISIT to the Quantocks is well worth making. They may be reached, and a good walk over them enjoyed, by leaving Bridgewater for Dodington or Holford, and then starting from Danesborough Height and following the track to Triscombe Stone, Crowcombe, Quantock Farm, Stowey, and Spaxton, where the high road will lead you safely home. Before starting on the walk over the Quantocks there are several interesting spots in the vicinity of Dodington and Holford that should be visited. For instance, there are Dodington Woods, Holford Glen, and the famous Beeches on the hill at Alfoxton, where WORDSWORTH and COLERIDGE used to saunter, and on one of

which Beeches the former poet carved his initials.

It is a May morning. The country is adorned in its lovely spring garment. The sun is not out, but dulness by no means abounds, and leaving for a while the "Castle of Comfort" at Dodington, where visitors receive the best attention, we stroll along the high road for Holford. How beautiful everything looks. Nature is all alive, wreathed in a wealth of glory, and affording constant visions of rich poetic beauty in colour and form. The hedges are bright with delicate greenery, while the trees bear foliage of the prettiest tints, and the stretches of grass land look like carpets of glossy velvet. Warblings of birds break the peaceful quietude reigning around. As we wander along with lovely scenery sparkling in our eyes and the sweet songs of our feathered friends ringing in our ears there comes upon us "that indefinable yearning for everything that is bright and fresh on this fair earth of ours."

Buzz-z-z. What's that? A big bird disturbed by our footsteps has hurried from a gorse bush and flown rapidly away. It has a large patch of green on its back, and is

known by the familiar name of the green woodpecker. Taking a bye-lane on the left we reach the top of a hill down the bottom of which lies the pretty little village of Holford. Descending the hill we cross the road, which has running by its side a murmuring stream, and ascend another situated at the back of the glen. We are on our way for the famous Beeches, but turning aside we trudge over a field that leads not to the Glen but to some woods in closer proximity to Mrs. JANE ST. ALBYN'S residence.

We want to watch the birds and hear them sing. Into the woods we plunge, and in the midst of bushes and under spreading trees we sit. Frightened at our intrusion the birds with one accord end their tunes and fly away. But we have only to keep quiet and they will come back again. Yes, one by one they return and re-commence their singing. It is delightful to listen to them. Without any stretch of the imagination we can fancy ourselves miles and miles away from Bridgwater, and in one of those sweet spots so charmingly described in the *Arabian Nights*.

Despite the criticisms modern cynicism has passed on the "rigours of an English spring" the month of May in an average year is the opening of the full effect of the feathered orchestra of which, unlike others, we never seem to tire. And May too is the month of all months to visit the country, which is then usually seen at its best, for as Heber sings—

Flocks on the mountains,
And birds upon their spray,
Tree, turf, and fountains,
All hold holiday

in the "merry month of May."

Of course some of the May songsters are better known than others. As we sit surrounded with trees and bramble we recognise more than one of our feathered friends. There is the chaffinch whose lively chatter is only heeded by the rustic as expressing from ancient days the wish for "a little bit of butter and no cheese," and the bird, we are told, is held by experts in Bethnal Green, where the prize contests are so enthusiastically crowded, to mean, in proportion to its elaboration, current coin of the realm. Handsome in appearance, the chaffinch is vigorous of note, and has a

peculiar liking for the "apple orchards green."

Now we hear the thrush with its sonorous voice, and now the brilliant hued yellow hammer, while on a branch close by us boldly sits a robin red-breast singing away most happily. Up on the top of a tree the redstart is making its voice heard, and ever and anon comes the cooing of the wood-pigeon, whose soft notes are an agreeable contribution to the music filling the air. Dozens of other birds, the cuckoo of course included, are busy singing, and

Soft flows the strain along the silent glade,
And well-pleased echo lends her willing aid,
as from distant trees one bird answers another. Sweet is the melody the songsters make, and sweet it is to linger and listen to them.

Tempus, fugit. We must be moving on. Reluctantly we leave the spot, and make for the lane again. Very soon the top of the lane is gained, and we find ourselves on the Quantocks. The celebrated Beeches running along the side of the hill stare us in the face. They are bowed down with age. Many a gale and many a storm have they withstood.

As we gaze at them, we think of the times of the past—of the times when WORDSWORTH and COLERIDGE used to saunter up that lane and along that very hill top. What a lot has happened since then; what changes have taken place; what general progress has been made. How different the world is to-day to what it was then!

On one of these trees are the initials of WORDSWORTH, carved by himself, and the villagers mention the fact with feelings of pride. From the top of this hill, too, a splendid view is to be obtained of the Bristol Channel which stretches as far as the eye can see. Proceeding down another lane at the end of the Beeches, we get other good views of the sea and far reaching fertile plain, and then pass through a gateway into Mrs. ST. ALBYN'S grounds.

We are now on the drive facing the house. We stop and admire the gardens for a few moments and continue our walk. The house is magnificently situated and commands a grand view. As we pass through the park the fallow deer eye us with wistful curiosity. The end of the drive is

nearly arrived at, and on either side are a number of lovely primroses, forming a beautiful border.

A minute or two more and we find ourselves on the outskirts of Holford Glen and then on the high road. It is fully dinner time, and we hurry along to Dodington to partake of the meal that is awaiting us.

When hardly a hundred yards from the "Castle of Comfort" we make the acquaintance of a notable personage—the Rev. JOHN EDWARDS. He is sitting, shrouded in rags, by the side of the hedge. By him are one or two dirty bundles. He has turned the middle of life, and looks a pitiable object of misery. Like all "kings of the road" he has his story to tell. At the outset he tells us that he is a "reverend" gentleman, and this brings an irresistible smile to our faces. He goes on to say that he was born at Wells, and that some little time ago he was sent away to preach the gospel, but before he had commenced his duties very long, some people—we hope they were not members of his congregation—stole his clothes and ran off with them. In consequence of this he was obliged to come home, and although his

friends seem to have refused to do anything for him he was as enthusiastic as ever over the gospel, and was that very morning on his way to Williton, where he purposed holding gospel services. We gave the Rev. JOHN EDWARDS a few coppers, and then wishing him good luck resumed our walk. In less than five minutes we were in the "Castle of Comfort" enjoying our dinner.

Soon after five o'clock we start for the walk over the Quantocks. The evening air is fresh and balmy. No sun is shining. Yet the country looks nice, and the walk is very agreeable. But, of course, had old Sol deigned to smile upon us, the enjoyableness of the walk over the hills would have been considerably enhanced. We saunter through the Dodington Woods *en route* for Danesborough Height. There is a good deal of life in the woods. Notes of well-known birds are heard. The wood-pigeon keeps fluttering by, disappearing almost immediately among the stately firs that look down upon us with an apparent air of majestic superiority. Yonder scampers a rabbit down the path, and if you watch it closely you will see it enter one of its many "asylums."

Here on the left is a fine old beech, its branches spreading far and wide. The stem is thickly covered with velvety moss, while the bright green of its foliage is a striking contrast to the dark foliage of the fir trees. Here just in front of us is a big bumble bee buzzing away most vigorously, but it does not attempt to sting us. We are now out of the woods and industriously ascending the hill. We are not long reaching Danesborough Point, and when we do we rest awhile, and meditate on the magnificent view at our command. In the distance is the sea, a splendid sheet of water, resembling a beautiful lake, and the very sight of it suggests the lines—

Away, away to the deep blue sea,
Where the waves are gently flowing ;
Let's ever be on the billowy sea,
Where the winds of heaven are blowing.

One plainly sees the Flat Holmes, the Steep Holmes, Burnham Lighthouse, and Brent Knoll, and by turning a little to the right one also gets a good glimpse of the Mendips, the Polden Hills, and the Parret, whose snake-like course can be followed for some little distance. Look to the left and you will get a peep through rising hills of St. Audries' Head and Minehead. Bordering the sea is

a fertile plain of great picturesqueness, and the whole scene is one that is not likely to be soon forgotten.

We resume our tramp. Down the thickly heather covered hill we go, through wooded slopes we push our way, and on the track we get. It does not take us long to reach the hill on the left of Crowcombe, from which we obtain a view of the village in the pretty plain below and of the heights of Exmoor in the distance beyond.

The sky has become rather cloudy, but suddenly there appears a golden streak of surpassing splendour in the heavens, adding to the scene a glorious glow of light and beauty. In a few moments the golden streak is gone, and the sky resumes its previous appearance.

Taking a short cut through the heather we enter a field, and go by the Quantock farm, which is snugly situated in a little valley encircled by the rising hills. Along the path we tread surrounded by stretches of yellow gorse and darksome heather. We continue the walk with a deep wooded combe down below and a well wooded hill above. Every now and again we get good glimpses of the Bristol Channel and lovely landscapes, and

every now and again the distant cry of the pheasant, the cooing of the woodpigeon, and the notes of the cuckoo testify to the wildness of the situation.

Look here. Just glance at this scene. Down on the left is an avenue of beautiful trees displaying foliage of the richest tints, and intermixed with the trees are heather and yellow gorse looking like a sheet of gold. On the bank are batches of smiling primroses and belts of beaming bluebells, while tumbling along its rugged course is a singing stream. Who could wish for a fairer sight? The winding path leads us through the charming grounds of Mr. E. J. STANLEY, M.P., at Over Stowey, and on to Nether Stowey, which was for some time the residence of COLERIDGE. Farther to the north, at the foot of one the loveliest wooded combes, is Alfoxton, already referred to, which was at the same time the home of WORDSWORTH. The two friends have told us how they used to meet and discuss high themes in many a delightful stroll, their neighbours much wondering the while, and the government of the day suspecting their advanced opinions. The end was that they

had to leave, but not before they had made an imperishable record of the beauties of the place. Thus WORDSWORTH writes to COLERIDGE in the *Prelude* :—

Beloved friend !

When looking back, thou seest in clearer view
Than any liveliest sights of yesterday
That summer, under whose indulgent skies
Upon smooth Quantock's airy ridge we roved
Unchecked, or loitered 'mid her sylvan combes ;
Thou in bewitching words, with happy heart
Didst chaunt the vision of that ancient man,
The bright-eyed Mariner, and rueful woes
Didst utter of the Lady Christabel.

COLERIDGE, in a note to the *Ancient Mariner*, says, "It was on a delightful walk from Nether Stowey to Dulverton, with WORDSWORTH, and his sister, in the autumn of 1797, that this poem was planned and in part composed."

And now as we proceed along the highroad homewards we feel that we have been well repaid for the journey made. Of each beauty of Nature we can say with WORDSWORTH—

We've met thee, like a pleasant thought,
When such were wanted.

The sweet songs of the birds we have heard,
the beautiful foliage and flowers we have

beheld, and the varied and picturesque scenes we have come across “shall be carried home in our hearts as a present delight and as a source of soothing memories in the days to come.”





GLASTONBURY AND WELLS.



EVERYONE acquainted with the West has heard of, if not visited, Glastonbury and Wells—two towns which can boast of great antiquity and of no mean historical associations. The towns are situated about six miles off one another, and no tourist would scarcely think of visiting the one without the other. We will deal with Glastonbury first as being from a historical point of view the more important of the two places. Containing some 4000 inhabitants, it is situated in the very centre of Somerset, and possesses many attractions.

Previous to Glastonbury having a railway station, the now obsolete stage coaches used to pass through the town, their arrival always

being anticipated with great pleasure and interest. Indeed the arrival and departure of the coaches constituted one of the most agreeable events of the day, but the spreading of railways gradually reduced the number of the coaches, until at last they fell off altogether.

The result was that for a time the town declined in prosperity, but it only declined to soon after rise to a greater height of success, the opening of the Somerset and Dorset line leading to a large increase in the number of inhabitants as well as in the trade of the place. The main line of the Great Western Railway joins the Somerset and Dorset line at Highbridge, from which Glastonbury may be quickly reached. It has also the sea-side towns of Burnham, Weston-super-Mare and Clevedon within easy distance.

To go back in history a little we find the early Britons called Glastonbury by the name of Yniswytrin, which afterwards the Saxons interpreted into Glastonbury, that is, the Glassy Island, in Latin Glasconia. It is also called the Island of Avalonia from the British name Avalla,

which signifies apples, because the soil there is naturally fertile of that fruit, which was found plentifully there when it was first cleared from wood and bushes, and made habitable.

That in ancient times Glastonbury was remarkably fruitful is beyond doubt. TENNYSON in his "Arthurian Idylls" thus happily writes of the place :—

The island valley of Avilion,
Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,
Nor ever wind blows loudly, but it lies
Deep meadowed, happy, fair, with orchard lawns,
And bowery hollows, crowned with summer sea.

On entering Glastonbury the attention of the visitor will be at once arrested by the picturesque position of the town, nestling as it does at the foot of, and gradually rising up the sides of the sloping hills that form the background. Nor will the visitor fail to be struck with the Tor Hill, crowned with the tower of the old church, of very early construction, which, next to the old Abbey, is perhaps, the chief feature of the place.

Standing out very prominently, the Tor forms a landmark for miles around. Its height is 520 ft., and on the top there used to be a Church, of which now, as

already mentioned, the tower alone remains. The Church must have been of very ancient date, but "no record of its first erection is extant." However, we are told that ST. PATRICK made mention of it when he came over soon after 461, stating it to be then in ruins, and tracing the foundation to two of the very early apostles to the Isle. As regards the body of the Church, it is reported to have been swallowed up by an earthquake at the latter part of the thirteenth century.

Between the Tor and Edmund's Hill, not far off, may be seen Chalice Hill, where legend says the cup of the Last Supper was buried by ST. JOSEPH of Arimathæa. From the top of the Tor Hill a beautiful view is obtainable. Surrounding one on all sides is a large stretch of low moorland, dotted here and there with houses, relieved now and again with belts of trees, and glittering in a hundred places with rhines (narrow streams of water) looking, under the benign influence of the sun, like silvery sheets of light.

Glancing towards the East the tourist espies the Reservoirs situated at Edgarley, and behind these almost hidden amongst a set

of stately trees stands the residence of Mr. J. A. PORCH. The quaint little hamlet of Havyatt is a little farther on, and beyond this is East Pennard, where, on a clear day, you can tell the time by the Church clock. Bending round to the right, so as to face S.E., one commands a fine view of the Quantocks and Butleigh Monument, which was erected to the memory of the late Sir A. A. HOOD, Bart.

Farther to the right one gets an excellent view of Street, charmingly situated in the very heart of a mass of beautiful trees.

Worthy of note also is the Weary-all-Hill, famous for the original home of the Holy Thorn. It is on this hill, tradition tells us, that JOSEPH and his disciples first rested, and being weary, called it Weary-all-Hill. Of course it does not follow, because they rested here, that this is necessarily the spot where they landed. We are told that for some reason, whether because his followers wanted a sign, or the people around faith in the unseen, JOSEPH

With his nerved arm struck his staff

Deep in the ground. "There may it stand," said he,
"The emblem of its parent cross, which bore

The father of our life and happiness—
There may it stand, through many a future age,
Firm as the faith we plant within this land,
Where we begin our pilgrimage.”

. Thence sprang
The thorn of Avalon, the wondrous tree,
.

By wood cut from the Cross.*

And there, we are told, it sprouted and
blossomed at once, and ever since blossoms at
Christmas season : As TENNYSON puts it:—

Where the winter thorn

Blossoms at Christmas, mindful of our Lord.

“Whatever may be the origin of the Holy
Thorn, whether it has a Continental birth-
place, and is merely an offshoot of some
species of thorn there growing, or whether
miracle embraces it, there is no doubt that
it does blossom in the winter about Christ-
mas Day. In one case, it is said that, as
it did not blossom on the 25th December,
it was considered a proof that that was not
the true Christmas Day; and as, on the
other hand, it did put forth its blossoms
on the 5th January, Christmas Day old
style, it was thought to receive the Divine
sanction of the Holy Day. And it is
further reported that some considerable

*T. Mayhew.

number of people, disappointed at its not blossoming, refused to attend church, or to keep the day as a church festival; and so serious was the movement that the ministers of various villages thought it prudent to give notice that Old Christmas Day shall be kept as in former times.

“For a long time pilgrimages were made to the tree; and the Bristol merchants made money by drying and exporting the flowers to foreign parts. But in later days, the whole thing was looked upon as a superstitious fiction; and one trunk of the tree was cut down in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, the other trunk being destroyed in the time of Charles II. It is stated that on its destruction a piece flew off and sadly wounded one of the men employed in the sacrilegious act. The tree has quite vanished from its ancient site, and now is only to be found in the gardens of the neighbourhood, or dispersed in various directions, being multiplied by budding or grafting. The nurserymen in the town will at any time supply young trees.”

Glastonbury lies cosily at the bottom of Tor Hill, and gives one the impression of

being a happy retreat from the hurly-burly of every-day life, so general in larger towns. To the due West shines the sea, on which, although so distant from it, one can perceive vessels sailing serenely on their course, while the Holmes are distinctly observable. So also is Sedgmoor—an ever memorable name. It was at Sedgmoor, as everyone must know, that the last battle on British ground was fought—where the *soi-disant* King MONMOUTH made his unsuccessful struggle for the throne and proved himself completely unpossessed of the attributes of an English soldier. It will be remembered that when he found his men were getting beaten in the fight (which began at midnight and lasted till day-break), MONMOUTH, instead of standing by them and encouraging them with his presence, slunk off like a coward, and deserted his followers. As the battle was, as just stated, the last fought on British soil, the following graphic account of it, as told by MICAH CLARKE to his grandchildren, and published in that entertaining book, “Micah Clarke,” by A. CONAN DOYLE, will no doubt prove of interest, particularly to West countrymen:—

“Out of the haze which still lay thick upon

our right there twinkled here and there a bright gleam of silvery light, while a dull thundering noise broke upon our ears like that of the surf upon a rocky shore. More and more frequent came the fitful flashes of steel, louder and yet louder grew the hoarse gathering tumult, until of a sudden the fog was rent, and the long lines of the Royal cavalry broke out from it, wave after wave, rich in scarlet and blue and gold, as grand a sight as ever the eye rested upon. There was something in the smooth steady sweep of so great a body of horsemen which gave the feeling of irresistible power. Rank after rank, and line after line, with waving standards, tossing manes, and gleaming steel, they poured onwards, an army in themselves, with either flank still shrouded in the mist. As they thundered along, knee to knee and bridle to bridle, there came from them such a gust of deep-chested oaths with the jangle of harness, the clash of steel, and the measured beat of multitudinous hoofs, that no man who hath not stood up against such a whirlwind, with nothing but a seven-foot pike in his hand, can know how hard it is to

face it with a steady lip and a firm grip.

“But wonderful as was the sight, there was, as ye may guess, my dears, little time for us to gaze upon it. Saxon and the German flung themselves among the pikemen and did all that men could do to thicken their array. Sir Gervas and I did the same with the scythesmen, who had been trained to form a triple front after the German fashion, one rank kneeling, one stooping, and one standing erect, with weapons advanced. Close to us the Taunton men had hardened into a dark sullen ring, bristling with steel, in the centre of which might be seen and heard their venerable Mayor, his long beard fluttering in the breeze, and his strident voice clanging over the field. Louder and louder grew the roar of the horse. ‘Steady, my brave lads,’ cried Saxon in trumpet tones. ‘Dig the pike-butt into the earth! Rest it on the right foot! Give not an inch! Steady!’ A great shout went up from either side, and then the living wave broke over us.

“What hope is there to describe such a scene as that—the crashing of wood, the sharp gasping cries, the snorting of horses,

the jar when the push of pike met with the sweep of sword! Who can hope to make another see that of which he himself carries away so vague and dim an impression? One who has acted in such a scene gathers no general sense of the whole combat, such as might be gained by a mere onlooker, but he has stamped for ever upon his mind just the few incidents which may chance to occur before his own eyes. Thus my memories are confined to a swirl of smoke with steel caps and fierce eager faces breaking through it, with the red gaping nostrils of horses and their pawing fore-feet as they recoiled from the hedge of steel. I see, too, a young beardless lad, an officer of dragoons, crawling on hands and knees under the scythes, and I hear his groan as one of the peasants pinned him to the ground. I see a bearded broad-faced trooper riding a grey horse just outside the fringe of the scythes, seeking for some entrance, and screaming the while with rage. Small things imprint themselves upon a man's notice at such a time. I even marked the man's strong white teeth and pink gums. At the same time I see a white-faced thin-lipped man leaning far

forward over his horse's neck and driving at me with his sword point, cursing the while as only a dragoon can curse. All these images start up as I think of that fierce rally, during which I hacked and cut and thrust at man and horse without a thought of parry or of guard. All round rose a fierce babel of shouts and cries, godly ejaculations from the peasants, and oaths from the horsemen, with Saxon's voice above all imploring his pikemen to stand firm. Then the cloud of horsemen recoiled, circling off over the plain, and the shout of triumph from my comrades, and an open snuff-box thrust out in front of me, proclaimed that we had seen the back of as stout squadrons as ever followed a kettle-drum.

“But if we could claim it as a victory the army in general could scarce say as much. None but the very pick of the troops could stand against the flood of heavy horses and steel-clad men. The Frome peasants were gone, swept utterly from the field. Many had been driven by pure weight and pressure into the fatal mud which had checked our advance. Many others, sorely cut and

slashed, lay in ghastly heaps all over the ground which they had held. A few by joining our ranks had saved themselves from the fate of their companions. Further off the men of Taunton still stood fast, though in sadly diminished numbers. A long ridge of horses and cavaliers in front of them showed how stern had been the attack, and how fierce the resistance. On our left the wild miners had been broken at the first rush, but had fought so savagely, throwing themselves upon the ground and stabbing upwards at the stomachs of the horses, that they had at last beaten off the dragoons. The Devonshire militiamen, however, had been scattered, and shared the fate of the men of Frome. During the whole of the struggle the foot upon the further bank of the Bussex Rhine were pouring in a hail of bullets, which our musqueteers, having to defend themselves against the horse, were unable to reply to.

“It needed no great amount of soldierly experience to see that the battle was lost, and that Monmouth’s cause was doomed. It was broad daylight now though the sun had not yet risen. Our cavalry was gone,

our ordnance was silent, our line was pierced in many places, and more than one of our regiments had been destroyed."

From the Tor Hill views may also be had of the tower of St. John's, and Bushey Combe, with its belt of elm trees, amongst which the houses of Bove Town are partly hidden. North-Westwards rises Brent Knoll in the distance, and one can see the spot where the Mendips begin. Cheddar—and who has not heard of its glories?—can also be seen, and the various hamlets at the foot of the Mendips look like the merest specks. Due North a grand view of Wells may be obtained, with its Cathedral and St. Cuthbert's Church "rearing their towers loftily to the sky."

No one would think of going to Glastonbury without visiting the widely-famed Abbey, or rather its ruins. To go into the history of the Abbey or to deal with it in other than mere general terms would occupy little short of an entire volume, and therefore we can only, as it were, glance at it here.

In the first place we may say that the history of the Abbey dates back to the earliest Christian era. That Christianity was of

very early date in Glastonbury appears certain from the fact that the Christians in Britain had communication with the Christians in Rome, and it is probable that the sons of the British officials were sent to Rome, to be educated in the house of PRUDENS and CLAUDIA, friends of ST. PAUL. And we are reminded that the early writers point to the fact of the first Church in which the name of Christ was preached, being planted in Yniswytryn (Glastonbury).

In 601 there is evidence of a charter being granted to the Abbey by the Damnonian King, GWRGAN; and Professor FREEMAN is of opinion that at about this date Glastonbury was made the great sanctuary of the British, in place of Ambresbury, which had but lately fallen.

After this, about 658, says Mr. G. W. WRIGHT, the erudite Hon. Sec. to the Glastonbury Antiquarian Society, the British were beaten further back, and Glastonbury became English; but, whereas, while the English were heathen they sought to destroy all Temples and Churches of the Christians, they now held them in reverence, and gave gifts for their maintenance.

Glastonbury therefore claims never to have failed in her worship of the true faith, and whether ST. PETER, or ST. SIMON, or ST. PHILIP, sent over the early missionaries; whether JOSEPH of Arimathæa came with his eleven disciples, as we would fain believe; or whether the Christian religion was first preached by other tongues, this can truly be boasted of, that at a very early date Christianity was preached at Glastonbury, and that from its earliest date its dissemination has continued through all mutations and difficulties to the present time.

There has been, declares Mr. WRIGHT, no break, no time when CHRIST has been set aside for any other name. Thus it will be seen that Glastonbury can boast of being a very ancient place, and the majestic ruins that act as a load-stone to thousands of visitors "tell of many mighty builders, and the first wooden Church of JOSEPH (said to have been erected on the very spot where the Abbey stands), came to be known as the *Vetusta Ecclesia*, the *Ealde Cirche*, as well as the *Lignea Basilica*, and many sacred personages found a resting place in its hallowed precincts."

The ruins of the Abbey, with its various adjoining buildings, such as the Chapter House (which was used for the transaction of the business connected with the Monastery), the Library (which was the first in England, and consisted of choice and valuable books, the gifts of Royalty and devotees of all classes), the Scriptorium (where those Monks noted for their scholarship and writing ability worked in transcribing the costly books, and illuminating missals), the Refectory (where the whole of the Monks repaired for their meals), the Guest House, the Kitchen, the Almonry (where the poor were liberally relieved two days in each week), and the School—these ruins are all well worth seeing, and cannot fail to prove of the greatest interest to the inquiring tourist or visitor.

Another very attractive feature of the town is what is called the Blood Spring or Holy Well, which is a spring that rises in a valley between the Tor and Chalice Hills, and a most interesting legend is attached to it.

“When JOSEPH came to the Island he is supposed to have brought with him the Chalice of the Last Supper, and it is said that it was buried somewhere in the hill now

known by its name. TENNYSON, speaking of the cup, says :—

“The cup, the cup itself from which our Lord
Drank at the last sad Supper with His own ;
This from the blessed land of Aramat,
After the day of darkness, when the dead
Went wandering over Moriah, the good Saint
Arimathæan Joseph, journeying brought
To Glastonbury, where the winter thorn
Blossoms at Christmas, mindful of our Lord.

“From the spot where the cup was buried,
wherever that may be, a spring arose, which
has ever flowed, and is still flowing in copious
streams of the purest sparkling water.

“Ah me ; so long ago

The mists of clouds and ages come between
That time and this, yet still the Chalice Spring
Is bubbling up ; nor winter frost nor drought
Affects it ; still it flows on ceaselessly.
No man’s invention can direct its course,
Nor find from whence it comes ; no hill supplies
Its shining waters ; straight from out the cup
It springs, and shall spring ceaselessly, for aye,
A gift, a miracle, from God to man.*

“So far its name of the Holy Well may
be accounted for. But it has another
and if possible more sacred name still. It is
a chalybeate water, and the iron in it is
easily oxidised as it becomes exposed to the

* A. M. Meadows.

atmosphere, and it leaves on the stones or earth it passes over a red deposit, from which peculiarity added to the supposition that it issues from 'the cup, the cup itself,' forms the foundation for its being known as the 'Blood Spring.' Moreover, after traversing a considerable distance, and falling into a stone trough, from which the overflow water escapes from the top, the deposit, being more confined, has been observed to form at the bottom of the vessel, a solid substance, which had the appearance of clots of blood.

"With these associations it is not wonderful that the spring was held in great reverence by the Saints of old, and that by its use many and great miracles were effected. It has, from the earliest times, been renowned for the cures that pilgrims to its source obtained. It is very probable the water was conveyed to the abbey, as will be shown; and there formed a source of income to the Monastery. It is much more likely the well in St. Joseph's Chapel, as it is now called, was supplied from a spring considered so sacred as this, than that it should have received its water from one in the immediate vicinity of which there is no trace.

“In 1751 MATHEW CHANCELLOR, of North Wootton, published a dream he had had, in which he was directed how to use the water for the disease, asthma, from which he was suffering. These directions he implicitly followed, and found permanent benefit. In 1852 a book was published by a physician, in which he gives his view of the value of the water, and the manner in which it acts upon the human frame, and then follows a large number of cases cured by its use, the accounts taken from patients who swore before a magistrate as to the truth of their assertions. At this time the water was visited by large numbers of patients from Bath and Bristol, and the surrounding parts, some ten thousand coming within a very short space of time. So large was the number that lodgings could not be obtained for all who came.”

Not a few men of note have been connected with Glastonbury, and among them the name of ST. DUNSTAN, a great promoter of monastic life, stands out pre-eminent. He became Archbishop of Canterbury, and died in 988. His skill in the smith's art was so great that the goldsmiths in London are

incorporated by the name of the Company of ST. DUNSTAN.

From Glastonbury there are a number of lovely drives and walks, the scenery all around being of a delightful description. Picturesquely situated, Glastonbury offers to the tourist some most enticing rambles, and it will be a strange thing if the tourist does not make for Wells, the road being a good one, and the prospect extremely inviting. In a comparatively short time Wells will be reached, and of course the centre of attraction there will be the fine old Cathedral.

“Wells is essentially an ecclesiastical city, perhaps the most remarkable of its kind in the world, and its existence and importance are almost wholly due to the religious foundations of which it was the seat. Before the time of INA, King of the West Saxons, the place was but a little village; but soon after this pious prince obtained the crown he founded a Church (A.D. 704) on the site of the present Cathedral. The town was first incorporated by Bishop ROBERT, who succeeded to the See in 1138, and died about 1166. This charter was

confirmed, and the privileges granted by it extended, by subsequent Bishops. The first Royal charter was granted by King JOHN in the third year of his reign (1201-2), and by this it was constituted a free borough, and the townsmen and their heirs free burgesses."

As already stated, the fine Cathedral is the centre of attraction to visitors, and with its group of subordinate buildings we are told it offers the most complete example of a secular Cathedral (*i.e.*, of the old foundation) now left to us.

An excellent view of the exterior is obtained from the south-east, across the moat and battlemented walls which surround the gardens of the episcopal palace, and from the Shepton Mallet road ; while from the spacious close a capital view may be had of the three towers, the majestic West front, with its superb screen, the noble chapter-house, and the unique chain bridge between the transept and the vicar's college. To JOCELIN, Bishop of Bath and Wells, from 1205 to 1241, is due the credit for the work of the whole of "the glorious West front," save the upper portion of the towers.

The work is said to form one of the most extraordinary examples of mediæval sculpture in Europe. "From basement to gable, it is full of rich and beautiful foliage of delicately-wrought stonework, and is covered with sculptures in deep niches, relieved by shafts of Kilkenny marble, constituting the earliest and most magnificent series of religious effigies disposed of in this manner to be found in Europe; the list includes 21 crowned kings, 8 queens, 31 mitred ecclesiastics, 7 knights, 14 nobles and princes, and upwards of 450 smaller figures, embodying the whole Christian scheme, from the Creation to the Day of Final Retribution, which crowns the central gable. On either side is portrayed the General Resurrection; above this is the Heavenly Hierarchy; while below our Saviour, in His Majesty, stand the figures of the Twelve Apostles. For artistic skill and excellence, these sculptures are not surpassed by any similar and contemporaneous works on the Continent, being full of action and gracefully draped, with every minute detail of costume carefully produced."

Next to the Cathedral in point of interest

is the Bishop's Palace, which, with its grounds, occupies an area of seven acres, and is one of the most perfect and interesting examples of castellated baronial mansions, as well as of early domestic architectural art, now existing in the kingdom.

Bishop JOHN DE VILLULA, 1088, is attributed with having laid the first foundation of the Palace, but the present structure, we learn, was the work of several different prelates, and is defended by an embattled wall with an alure behind the parapet, built by Bishop RALPH DE SALOPIA after 1329, and an outer gate house, with square flanking towers and a drawbridge suspended by chains across the moat, which surrounds the whole.

The city of Wells owes its modern name to the springs or wells near the Eastern end of the Cathedral, and in ancient times it was known as "Welle," "Welliae," and other names, all having reference to its remarkable springs, the chief of which, known as "St. Andrew's Well," still exists in the gardens of the Palace.

A very interesting story is told about the water of Wells. It is to the effect that Bishop BECKINGTON, a liberal benefactor

to the city, granted to the inhabitants the right to a continuous supply of water from the "St. Andrew's Well." This grant is still in force, the water being conveyed to the great conduit in the Market Place, and thence flowing along the side of the streets, forming a most interesting feature in the city. To show their gratitude for such a boon the citizens bound themselves to make a yearly pilgrimage to the tomb of their benefactor, and there pray for the repose of his soul.

It is worthy of note that Wells is said to be the only city in England which has not furnished a title of nobility.





BRENT KNOLL.



F there is any place in the West any one should make a point of seeing, it is Brent Knoll. The air on the top of the Knoll is of the most invigorating kind, and the view on all sides is very striking; embracing first the great alluvial plain, with all its wonderful richness, reaching up to Glastonbury Tor; and on all sides, except that towards the Mendip—here in its finest outline, and including the Cheddar Cliffs—extending from forty to fifty miles. Another reason why Brent Knoll should be visited is because at its foot lies the home of that distinguished ornament of the Church of England, the Venerable Archdeacon DENISON. The likelihood is that sometime during the afternoon

you will find him about the vicarage grounds, or in the church, which alone is worth seeing. But about that we shall have more to say a little later on. As for the Archdeacon he is a most genial gentleman, and if you are not particularly backward he will very readily enter into a pleasant chat with ycu.

It was a lovely afternoon when a small party of us proceeded to Brent Knoll to ramble through the immediate country. Arrived at Brent Knoll we make our way up a dusty lane leading to the village and church, enter the churchyard, and after examining the exterior of the ancient edifice, commence to climb the steep hill familiarly termed the Knoll, determining to reach the summit.

The sun is shining gloriously, and the ascent is no easy task. Yet upward we perseveringly climb, occasionally seeking a change by sitting down for a few minutes in some shady spot, and taking a glance at the lovely scene below us. As BENJAMIN FRANKLIN says, perseverance is bound to bring its own reward, and never more do we realise the truth of this than when we reach with a shout of

triumph the top of the Knoll. The scene that lies stretched before us on all sides is surpassingly beautiful, and is a rich reward for any fatigue the ascent has cost us. Old Sol is in one of his happiest moods, and the brilliancy of his smiles adds considerably to the grandeur of the surrounding country. A delightful breeze playing about the top of the hill fans our heated faces, and for some time we stand drinking in the delicious air and admiring the magnificent view before us. The undulating meadow lands in which cattle are quietly grazing, the belts of trees wreathed in foliage of lovely green, the Lilliputian-looking villages, and Burnham sea, with its ceaseless music, sparkling like so many gems in the distance—all this constitutes a scene which is not easily effaced from the memory.

“Time waits for no man” is an old adage, and remembering this we turn our faces towards East Brent, and commence to make a descent, being desirous of paying a visit to Archdeacon DENISON’S place. Just as it is more easy to swim with the tide than against it, so is it easier to make a descent than an ascent, as many only too well know, and needless to say we are not long getting to

the bottom of the hill. Then we catch for the first time a good glimpse of the Venerable gentleman's house half hidden in a thick belt of trees, and standing in peaceful serenity within a stone's throw of the church. Having inspected a portion of the grounds we wend our way to the edifice, which, being open, we timidly enter. No service being on, we at once begin examining the interior. One cannot help being struck with the beautiful decorations which meet one's eyes at all points and turns. Banners containing Scriptural texts and quotations from the Common Prayer Book are suspended on the pillars, while similar texts and quotations are also suitably and attractively arranged round the walls. The pulpit is profusely adorned with lovely flowers, and as for the altar, it is brilliantly decorated, and presents a most picturesque appearance.

Being informed that a service would be held at half-past six o'clock, at which Archdeacon DENISON would be present, we make up our minds to attend it, and as there is an hour to wait we ramble into the village and utilize the time by partaking of a rural tea. On our return we meet the Archdeacon slowly

walking with the aid of a stick up the foot-path to the church. After an exchange of a few kindly words we enter the building together, and the tintinnabulation of the bell having ceased, the service commences. The Archdeacon takes the leading part, and the service, though short, is of an impressive character. Notwithstanding that he is something like 85 years of age, Archdeacon DENISON still actively engages himself in church matters, and sets a laudable example to younger men by turning every minute to good account.

Catch then, O catch the transient hour ;
Improve each moment as it flies ;
Life's a short summer—man a flower—
He dies—alas ! how soon he dies !

And of the Venerable Archdeacon it can conscientiously be said that he is a great husbander of time, using it judiciously and wisely. Rising almost every morning before six o'clock, he turns every hour to good account, replying to his numerous correspondents, studying the Book of books and other theological works, participating every day in devotional services in his little church, and taking out-door exercise. Not unfrequently, too, his well-known face is seen in

London and other places, the interests of the Church claiming all his energy, time, money, and talents. How dearly he loves the Church of England, and how much he is concerned for her welfare, may be seen from the following extract from a letter written by the Venerable Archdeacon to the author of this book:—"All the money that I have to spare—and it is not much—goes in the cause of the Church of England, in the endeavour to recover for her her true constitutional position in Church and State. The position is a 'Divine gift.' Like all other 'Divine gifts' it has been invaded and betrayed—invaded from without and betrayed from within. What I have left of life, and strength, and energy, and means, goes in the Church's cause."

Archdeacon DENISON never speaks without revealing a mind of wonderful fertility and vigour, and his utterances, full of weight and earnestness as they are, always command the deepest attention of every thoughtful listener. A powerful and caustic writer on matters affecting Church and State, but a man of gentle disposition and generous sympathies in private life, the Venerable Archdeacon has

won the esteem and goodwill of a large circle of persons, and is greatly respected in the Church of England, whose cause he has championed with so much zeal and ability.

But to the church again. The service over, we once more make tracks for the Knoll. The return ramble is most delightful. The heat of the sun has abated, and in its stead has sprung up a soft refreshing breeze, very welcome to us now weary-growing travellers. The Knoll is at last ascended, and after a short rest on the top and another good look at the splendid scene around us, we commence the descent, which is safely and quickly made. On arriving in the village we find our horse and trap awaiting us, and most enjoyable is the drive home in the pleasant quiet of eventide.





CHEDDAR.

RUTH is stranger than fiction. Nowhere is this familiar saying more forcibly brought home than at Cheddar. What is there at Cheddar to interest? does some one ask. Our reply is, go and see.

Whether you explore the straggling, Swiss-like village of over 3,000 inhabitants, or visit the marvellous caves, unsurpassed in the world, or view the mighty rocks forming in part the magnificent cliffs for which Cheddar is so noted, you will be at once struck with admiration and wonderment.

Cheddar has been called by Mr. F. A. KNIGHT in his charming book, "Idylls of the Field," a national glory. We consider it to be entitled to be pronounced one of

the wonders of the world. Dean ALFORD declared Cheddar to be the grandest rocky defile he knew; certainly no one who visits the place can come away disappointed. It is constantly provoking expressions of admiration and amazement, and kindles the interest, and arouses the enthusiasm of the most callous visitor.

One thing the thoughtful observer will be impressed with is the contrast, from a moral and social standpoint, of Cheddar to-day with Cheddar as the good and philanthropic Mrs. HANNAH MORE found it. As is very well known, when Mrs. HANNAH MORE first visited Cheddar the people were living a life little better than that of heathenism, their spiritual and social welfare being completely neglected. How pained the good lady was at her discovery, and how, in face of great bodily weakness and many difficulties, she worked to Christianise and educate the poor superstitious people, and to improve their lot generally, is now quite a matter of history.

At Cheddar, as in other surrounding villages, Mrs. HANNAH MORE, who by the way was the founder of that grand institution, the Religious Tract Society, lit a light destined

never to die out, but to grow brighter and brighter with increasing years, carrying cheer and comfort to many a heart and home.

Cheddar now boasts of some five or six places of worship, all, more or less, well attended. The cottage in which Mrs. HANNAH MORE conducted her first school still remains, and is an object of considerable interest to visitors. The centenary of the school was celebrated in befitting style last year—1889.

When about three parts of the way through the village cliffwards one is struck with some of the dwellings of the poor on the right of the road. Small, low roofed, and stone floored, they afford a fair idea of the wretched dwellings that were for sometime a standing disgrace to Cheddar, and to civilization. But these are no doubt the best of the lot, and are perhaps considered sufficiently good for the class of people inhabiting them. On the left is a miniature lake backed with thick foliage and rising hills known as the Mendips.

A little farther on, and we come to COX'S Stalactite Cavern, which, with that

of GOUGH'S a few yards beyond, constitutes one of the principal features of Cheddar. We pay a shilling and enter the cave. Report has led us to expect much, and for once our expectations are not disappointed.

The sight presented is truly an extraordinary one. It baffles description. To be understood and appreciated it needs to be seen. The Very Rev. the late DEAN of LLANDAFF told a friend that the cave was "the only thing I ever saw that at all realises my idea of Antiparos. It has one main porch, and three or four lateral branches—narrow fissures about ten or twelve feet broad, and some thirty or forty feet high, vested and draped with the most fantastic marble of Stalactite one can conceive." This is precisely the case.

The cave is well lit with gas, reflectors throwing the light into every cavity, showing the most Lilliputian water sculpture to be anywhere seen.

The cave was discovered by the present Mr. COX'S father, who accidentally came across it while looking out a place to build a coach-house. It lies hid away under the rocky cliffs. A peculiar odour, not altogether

unpleasant, pervades the cave ; and now and again a kind of fog spreads itself across the open spaces.

The roof of the cave presents, as indeed does the whole interior, a fine specimen of sculpture, entirely effected by the wonderful power of water. The rich colouring of the roof combined with its artistic carvings and elegant drapery is a splendid study. Here is to be found work that even MELONIAN, the great Grecian Sculptor, would acknowledge as being far superior to all his skill and genius.

Whichever way one looks one is confronted with the most remarkable triumphs of sculpture, now it is a large brown loaf as though fresh from the baker's, then a fat goose, now a Hindoo Temple, and then a sheet of marble beautifully marked and hanging in graceful folds, with red, white, pink, amber, and terra-cotta incrustations.

All these masterpieces of art have been slowly produced through the agency of water alone, and in the opinion of able authorities must have occupied not only thousands, but millions of years in coming about.

Proceeding up a flight of stairs between

two high rising rocks we come to what is known as the Fairies' Grotto, where a pool of water on a Stalagmite plateau perfectly reflects a picturesque little chamber some thirty feet away, and forms a very pleasing sight. The small Stalactites, each glistening with a drop of water from the top of the cave, are inverted and concentrated on a small surface, the glittering drops bearing the appearance of sparkling diamonds.

The only expressions one makes as one explores the cavern are "wonderful" "marvellous," "extraordinary," "unique," and such like.

Coming downstairs the guide points out a projection that has been 'sawn through, displaying the composition of Stalactite, which is nothing less than marble beautifully coloured and veined. It is only natural that such a treasure house should attract many men of eminence to it, and among those who have visited this cave may be mentioned the names of H.R.H. the Prince of Wales, T.R.H. the Duke and Duchess of D'Aumale, H.R.H. Prince of Siam, the Duke of Argyll, and Earl Kimberly, etc. Feeling that what we have said of the cave affords but an

imperfect idea of its remarkable interior we gladly give the following able description of it by ELIHU BURRITT, the distinguished American linguist :—

“ You will be sure to visit one of Nature’s curiosity shops, discovered by sheer accident about thirty years ago near the mouth of this great aperture in the Mendips. A Mr. Cox broke into this singular treasury one day while exploring out a hole in the wall opening upon the public road. In delicacy of execution, versatility of genius in works of fancy, its water sculpture far surpasses anything that I saw in the Mammoth Cave in Kentucky. From the domestic character of the subjects here revealed it might be taken for one of the small back kitchens of nature, with a well furnished pantry done in stone. Here are turkeys hanging by the legs as if just from or for the market, a good stout loaf of brown bread with the baker’s thumb marks upon it, translucent curtains partly folded, a chime of bells with a sharp steely ring to them ; in fact, a very pattern shop filled with pre-historic prototypes or models of human householdry of all shapes and uses, as well as of artistic sculpture for public galleries. But

of all the exquisite work of the water drops in this laboratory, nothing struck me so forcibly as the ticking and the telling of a little watch that Nature had wound up and set agoing here perhaps before Adam was created. It is a century glass made for Time to tick off the Earth's Ages; and it keeps the reckoning with a precision that an astronomer would covet for his chronometer. In the plain, clear Saxon of boys' language, it is the dripping of an icicle of stone which freezes as it falls and forms another icicle pointing upward. Boys know how these points near each other until they join and make one column of ice from bottom to top. With this in their eyes they will see how this century glass works in the cave. From the fine tip of a stone icicle, called a Stalactite, there falls once or twice in five minutes, a tiny drop of water, which has a little dash of lime in it. Perhaps a pint of it may fall in the space of twenty-four hours. This continual dropping makes a good deal of *wet* on the rocky bottom for a considerable space around. I believe no one has tested the water, but perhaps what falls in a week contains a teaspoonful of lime sediment. This hardens into stone, looking like layers of

candied sugar. There gradually a little point arises out of the centre of a wide foundation of these layers. Every drop falls and splits on this sharp point, just moistening it anew, once a minute. Yet there is lime in this little moisture, and it hardens and builds up the tiny horn of stone: but how slowly! It would be an interesting sight and instructive, too, for children to stand by and see that clock work go on. When Mr. COX first broke into this dark, low-roofed clock factory of Nature, and held his torch up to see what was going on there, among other sights was this ticking timepiece—two icicles of stone trying to make their points meet, as hundreds standing about the Cave had already done centuries ago. The lower one had arisen about a foot from the foundation. It was climbing up slowly. He had watched it for nearly twenty years, and could see hardly the difference of an inch in its height; yet it was climbing, perhaps, at the rate of six inches a century. Just so many drops a day it receives upon its point from the one above, just so many millimeters in a decade it makes in its upward progress. With a good microscope one perhaps might see how much it grows in

a single year. It is one of Nature's chronometers hung up in the thousand and one caverns of the earth, whose minute hand tells off her centuries. For myself I never before looked at a timepiece and heard it tick with such thoughts—in such contrast with the scant measurements of human life.”

Leaving the remarkable cave we proceed through the village towards the massive and mighty cliffs. As we stroll along several things of interest claim our attention. First, there is another miniature lake with two or three tiny cottages almost touching the water, so that you wonder how it is possible for the inmates to come out without stepping into it, and then a little farther on you come across GOUGH'S Cave, attractively situated in the verdant-covered rocks, which you cannot resist gazing upon for some minutes. The longer you linger the more you admire them. There is something irresistibly captivating about them, and it is with reluctance that you turn your head and move on.

A few steps farther, and you stop again. The object of your attention is now a rude archway in a piece of rock on the left, with an old cart sheltering its feeble frame under

it. Simple and inelegant as the picture is, yet it is curiously interesting.

In less than another minute one finds oneself by the side of a picturesque little cottage on the left of the road standing entirely by itself. It lies cosily enough at the foot of the towering cliffs. The roof is a thatched one, and the apartments, though evidently small, look to be scrupulously spruce.

The bird-cage hangs upon the wall,
Amid the clust'ring vine ;
The rustic seat is in the porch,
Where honeysuckles twine.

Humble though the dwelling be the occupants are certainly fond of flowers, for the windows are bright with beautiful blooms, and

The open'd casement, flinging wide,
Geraniums give to view ;
With choicest posies rang'd between,
Still wet with morning dew.

The picturesque abode at once takes your fancy and well-nigh makes you envy the happy inmates.

And now we have come to the bend of the road, and the village is shut out of sight. Huge rocks look down upon us with a sternness that makes us shudder. They

seem to laugh at our littleness, and verily we feel how insignificant man is.

How wonderfully formed are some of these tremendous rocks, and what impressions they give the mind! Here to the right is a great overhanging rock with a considerable portion of its foundation entirely gone, and as you look at it you expect the whole mass to tumble upon you; but, no, it stands safe and sure, and probably will be still standing there in ages to come.

To the left the rocks rise gently, and are not so high, though as we proceed on our way we find their height increases, until on either side of us are stupendous rocks only divided by the width of the road, gazing at one another in sublime silence.

Hark! we hear a human voice from above. We turn our eyes heavenwards, and on the top of a projecting pinnacle which seems to be tipping the skies we faintly perceive the form of a man. He shouts again. It is only a greeting, and we walk slowly on, wondering at the venturesomeness of the man who had trusted his life in such a perilous position.

A noise! A rumbling! What's the cause

of it? We listen and look around. A piece of rock has been set free, and has made the rumbling noise by rolling down the stony cliff, and we are pleased to think it is nothing worse.

Immense and remarkable as are the rocks they would lose much of their attraction and glory but for the picturesqueness lent them by the pretty greenery and lovely foliage with which they are everywhere adorned. Just examine these great towers of rock forming almost a semi-circle, with bases of a most irregular kind. Gracing the foundations are numbers of soft blue harebells smiling from the grass; a little higher up the rocks beautiful ferns wave to and fro; from the crevices peeps out the delicate little Cheddar pink; while running along above it is a network of the freshest ivy; and bending their full-foliaged forms from this and that rocky projection are little bushes and trees of the fairest tints. One massive piece of rock in particular has a magnificent appearance. It is richly draped with fold after fold of ivy ingeniously interwoven with charming foliage, portions of which caught by the sun look like so many dazzling gems. And ever

and anon there comes a gentle rustling of all this wealth of foliage, enforcing one to repeat the lines :—

Oh ! how I love to calmly muse
In such an hour as this ;
To nurse the joy creation gives,
In purity and bliss.

But flowers and foliage are not the only tenants of these rocky cliffs. Birds of various kind inhabit them, and all through the live-long day keep themselves *en evidence*. Jack-daws innumerable make the cliffs their home and pass their time away in continuous clatter and in vieing with one another in sailing from one projecting height to another under the sunny sky.

Then there are rock-doves and daws, the grey wings of the former constituting a pleasing contrast to the dark plumage of the latter, and then, too, one must not forget to mention the kestrels, whose shrill screams become very familiar before one has been among the cliffs very long. Altogether the birds form quite an interesting feature of the place, and enliven in no little way the prevailing quietude by their constantly chattering tongues and frequent flyings across the winding ravine from peak to peak.

Cheddar Rocks have been compared to the "bleak horrors of Black-gang and the verdant honours of Shanklin Chine, crowned with the Druidical remains from Stonehenge, together with the huge Tors of Dartmoor." Mrs. H. MORE, writing about them to a friend, described "the lofty Cliffs of Cheddar" as "so stupendously romantic, that the shade of OSSIAN or the ghost of TALIESIN himself, might range, not undelighted, through them."

Curiously enough nearly every interesting district has its romantic tradition, and Cheddar is no exception. Though well-known locally, the tradition may not be familiar to the readers of this book. So we record it here:—

* "On his elevation to the regal dignity, king EDMUND admitted to his counsels the blessed DUNSTAN, and had him numbered among his royal courtiers and nobles, knowing him to be of approved life and of ready speech, which had been evinced while his brother was yet living. Beholding the un-deviating good conversation of the man, many of the king's officers and servants said,

* Roger of Wendover "Flowers of History," formerly ascribed to Matthew of Paris. Vol. 1, page 250. Sub Anno 940. Bohn's Edition.

‘He is a good man,’ others said, ‘Nay, but he deceiveth the people.’ Wherefore certain persons, envious of his goodness and prudence, began to lessen him in the king’s eyes, to whom the king lending a favourable ear, and not well examining the matter, commanded DUNSTAN to be deprived immediately of every honour with the dignity of chancellor, and to seek service elsewhere where he would. On the morrow the king, for his amusement, went out hunting with his attendants; straightway the woods resounded with the hunter’s horn and the barking of the dogs; a multitude of deer took to flight, one of which of extraordinary size the king singled out for the chase, and followed with his dogs alone, driving him through difficult paths unto the edge of a precipice, over which the stag and dogs fell headlong and were dashed to pieces. The king following at full speed, and seeing the precipice, strove to rein in his steed; but not being able to keep back the unruly and stiffnecked animal, he gave up all hope of saving himself, and commended his soul to the pleasure of almighty God, saying, ‘I give thee thanks, Lord Jesus Christ, that at this time I do not remember

having injured any one but DUNSTAN only ; and this fault I will with ready zeal amend by a hearty reconciliation, if Thou only grant me time.' At these words, through the merits of the blessed man, the horse stood still on the very verge of the precipice, and the king, recovering himself, gave God thanks for the restitution of his life. On reaching home he ordered the blessed DUNSTAN to be fetched, and no sooner was he come than they mounted their horses and rode together on the road leading straight to Glastonbury. On arriving there, having entered the monastery, the king took DUNSTAN by the right hand, and, kissing it, led him to the cathedral seat, in which, with the consent of the monks, he set him, with these words, 'Be thou a faithful abbot of this seat and church ; and if anything be wanting for the holy religious service, I will supply it of my royal bounty.'"

Of course the general desire of tourists and visitors is to ascend the magnificent cliffs, and with due care the desire may be successfully satisfied. Then, what a delightful view is obtained, what a bracing air is breathed, what a glorious glow fills the frame and brightens


the whole being! There is medicine for the mind, and a balm for the body.

And where is Cheddar situated? How many days does it take to reach? Cheddar is situated in Somerset, and is only about 22 miles from Bristol! You change at Yatton (a station or two past Bristol) for it, and it may be reached from any part of England in a few hours. Yet we are afraid that to the great majority of the English people the unique charms of Cheddar are entirely unknown.





FROM
EXETER TO NEWTON
ABBOTT,
OVER THE
GREAT HALDON HILLS.

N the rush and turmoil and rapid locomotion of these later days the humble efforts of the "tramp" are not unlikely to be overlooked. Yet the traveller afoot possesses many advantages over the traveller by rail, the cyclist, or the horseman. True, he cannot cover the same extent of country in the same time, but what he does see—if he chooses—he can see well. To him the country is not one swift succession of panoramic views, leaving the memory as rapidly as the scene changes, but a closer acquaintance—a friend who will

stand him in good stead when the fleeting friendships of human kind fade and vanish away.

It is to the pedestrian alone that the chiefest beauties of nature are known. It is he who can traverse best the wild heights of Exmoor and Dartmoor ; and the cool brown streams that rush and tumble down their slopes are his particular delight ; and the meadow paths—are they not sacred to his footfall ?

And if one has not too tender a conscience as to landowners' rights, and can never see that "Trespassers will be prosecuted," what a wealth of information is to be reaped by the hedgerow or in the pathless wood with their infinite variety. Then again the exhilarations of walking, the vagabond existence, the independence of everybody and everything, and the necessity for taking little thought as to the hours that fly are conducive to cheerful spirits.

JOHN BURROUGHS has said that the devil is a bad walker. It is quite certain he rides whenever he can, and the good walker need never doubt his ability to leave him behind. Surely this is an advantage worth striving after, and one capable of giving the pedestrian

an enjoyment the traveller by other methods wots not of.

Of all our English counties there is none perhaps so dear to the heart of the walker as the County of Devon—the “Eden of the West.” And one of the not least attractive of the many beautiful rambles it contains is that from Exeter to Chudleigh and Newton Abbott, keeping as far as possible along the ridge of the Great Haldon Hills. For the first three miles or more the way lies along the high road to Moreton Hampstead until by a succession of “round rising hillocks” and “high delightful plain” we reach the village of Longdown and high ground.

Turning through a lane to the left we now commence to touch the Haldon heights. This range of hills extending in a southerly direction to close upon Dawlish and Teignmouth is of an almost uniform height of 800 feet. Tempted by the shade afforded on the edge of the wood by which the lane continues to wind, the instructions of the guide book to take the first branch to the right are forgotten, and ere long it is discovered that the way has been missed.

A halt is made and bearings taken, when it

is discovered that by striking across the fields the right direction can be regained. Crossing a ploughed field a pleasant hillside meadow is reached where the cattle chewing the cud look with placid wonder at the intruders upon their privacy.

Descending into a valley a pleasant little brook is reached. Standing on the rustic footbridge and listening to the murmur of the waters, we hear it speaking the language TENNYSON has so beautifully translated :

“ I come from haunts of coot and hern,
I make a sudden sally,
And sparkle out among the fern
To bicker down a valley.”

Oblivious of the presence of mankind the wagtail makes his graceful way in the shallow stream, and in the distance where the brook is overhung with a brambly wilderness and where the primrose grows in rich profusion, offering its delicate petals to the morning sun, are two little bonny bonneted maidens making amid the fresh green herbage a pretty study in pink and green.

After another hill has been climbed we suddenly find ourselves dropped into the hamlet of Dunchidiock. “Far from the busy haunts of men” this little village is most

romantically placed in the hollow between two hills. Favoured with a charming little church, surrounded by tall elms, just now alive with the "caw and clamour" of the rooks, and studded with orchards, this would indeed be a haven of rest wherein to dream one's life away.

From this point the tower of the triple sided "Belvedere" is only a short distance. It is situated on the highest point of the hills and was built for the sake of the view which can only be seen from the tower, the hills at this point being thickly wooded. But alas for that selfishness which sometimes characterises even people in high places, it is now closed to the public. After leaving the woods and reaching the open moor, the way lies along the ridge of the hill, and we obtain a magnificent view of the surrounding country. On the east we see wide stretches of well cultivated field, and trim set hedge. Nearer at hand are Exmouth and the mouth of the Exe. To the north-east Exeter lies sleepily in the sun, backed by the Blackdown hills. Then to the north we see JAN RIDD'S well-beloved Exmoor, and on the far west her elder sister Dartmoor raises her rugged

heights, the intervening space being filled by the rich and fertile valley watered by one of the most beautiful of Devon rivers, the Teign.

It is a sight to make one's heart beat quicker with a new and happier sense of life. We feel how appropriate was the description by the celebrated American Naturalist already quoted, when such sights induced him to affectionately call our country "mellow England." The morning sun is now well up. It is one of Spring's earliest days, and the trees are putting forth the "tender bud of hope," the elms have just that soft tinge of green which hides not the delicate network of branches but makes them beautiful indeed.

Circling aloft in airy space the larks are pouring out their pæan in a torrent of tumultuous melody. In the tall trees, which here and there skirt the moor, we hear the cheery note of the chiff-chaff, one of Spring's earliest harbingers, the yellow-hammers in their bright plumage and filled with the bliss of early courting days are everywhere, and even an early butterfly is on the wing. All nature is gay, and an air of *abandon* pervadeth everything.

After pursuing the track on the hill-top for some distance, the direct road from Exeter to Chudleigh crosses the hill, and taking this road the quiet little town is reached. It is very picturesquely situated, but in itself there is little to interest the stranger. Some short distance, however, beyond the town are some blue limestone rocks, rising abruptly, and forming a striking feature in the landscape. The rocks have a fine covering of trees.

From the top the view is very beautiful, covering on one side the whole of the valley of the Teign with the deep blue mass of Dartmoor for a background. On the other side there is a pretty view of the romantic little glen which winds at the back of the rock, with a stream dancing and bounding over rock and through fern, and forming here and there delightful little cascades. Half-way up the rock is a cave called the "Pixies' Parlour," which, tradition says, was visited by COLERIDGE. It is reached by an uneven passage of some 135 feet, and in the principal cavity is an incrustation called the "Pope's Head." Below the rock also there is a cavern ending in an abyss.

The way from Chudleigh to Newton Abbott, a distance of five miles, lies along a pleasant highway. The day is coming to its close. The moon in the glory of its fulness is rising slowly up the East, whilst bathed in a flood of crimson light the sun is sinking to its setting behind the Western Dartmoor Hills, tipping their rugged heights with purple colour.

A quiet fills the pleasant evening air, and a music steals into the soul—

“A music that gentlier on the spirit lies,
Than tir’d eyelids upon tir’d eyes.”

A thrush is warbling his evening lay, and as we stay to listen he gives us again his “first long careless rapture,” and we hear from yonder distant elm the answer of some fellow songster. Pursuing our way, some yellow beaked blackbird, disturbed by the footfall on the evening air, with unnecessary and startled cry, bursts from the hedge bottom and makes for a more secure retreat.

The sun has now quite gone, and the silvery moon shines upon a nature apparently at rest. Before reaching Newton we cross the Teign, upon which the moon casts its broken reflection; and in the distance we

see the tops of groups of firs floating upon a sea of mist.

Newton is reached at last, and we are filled with satisfaction—the satisfaction only known to the lover of the country when he feels that he has garnered up another stock of anecdote, of scenes, dear, delightful, and detailed, which will serve in the years to come, before the lamps are lighted, to interest the children round his knee, and when the feet have lost their former nimbleness, and the eyes their brightness, to weave a tender garland of memories which shall ease the decline to that “bourn from whence no traveller returns,” and give us “light at evening time.”





ACROSS DARTMOOR.

FROM Ivybridge to Princetown, across the wild and rugged Dartmoor, is a magnificent walk. The distance is about sixteen miles. Glorious weather prevailed on the day that we started on such a perambulation, and right well we enjoyed the varied and beautiful pictures that Nature continually unfolded before us as we proceeded on our journey. For the purpose of getting a view of the best scenery in the locality we decided to do our walking as far as possible by the side of the Erme, a river of great picturesqueness.

Up to as far as the hamlet of Harford, one comes across nothing but the prettiest views and sweetest sights. Trees of all sorts and

sizes, with their bending branches shielding the sun from the faces of admiring wanderers, run on either side of the silvery stream, whose merry murmurs as it proceeds along its rocky bed fall like music on the ear. A halo of happiness and harmony exists all round. Everything breathes of beauty and freshness. Even the birds seem to be inspired with the loveliness of the scene, and warble away to their heart's content. Who could fail to enjoy a walk through such a spot? The wonder is that more do not make an effort to visit such beautiful places so near at hand.

Harford reached, we decide to continue our walk by the side of the river to its source, and then to go over the hills till we arrive at Princetown. Immediately on leaving Harford we could fairly be said to be on Dartmoor, and there is an end to the picturesque and sylvan scenery which has been for over two miles affording us so much pleasure and delight. Now we have come to the wild, the romantic, and sublime. Here are no trees to shade one from the warm rays of the sun; here is no beaten track, or pathway, along which one may safely trod; all is open and wild, rough and rugged. Yet the sight is a

grand one. The opinion one forms of it is briefly thus "Like the fragments of an earlier world."

CARRINGTON appropriately describes Dartmoor as "the source of half the beauty of Devon's austral meads," and while he mourns over its native barrenness, justly celebrates its importance to the whole surrounding region in the bountiful economy of Him who "sendeth His springs into the rivers which run among the hills." Rich in Celtic remains, Dartmoor also in later times is, says one of its admirers, an ancient stannary district, and the Royal Forest urges many claims to our attention, whilst in its present state, and as a field of scientific research, an origin of picturesque and romantic scenery, and the asylum of old world customs and languages, it can scarcely fail to excite the interest not only of those whose local partialities might be supposed to influence, but of others who hold with the great English moralist that "whatever withdraws us from the power of the senses, whatever makes the past, the distant, and the future predominate over the present advances us in the dignity of thinking beings."

No one can cross over Dartmoor without having his mind elevated, his thoughts invigorated, and his love of Nature increased and strengthened. The imposing hills speckled with huge pieces of rock and crowned with formidable tors, the mountain streams that seem to have chosen the steepest places to come down for the sake of the leaps, and the general wildness of the situation all serve to impress the mind and please the eye. Surely no one possessed of a particle of sensibility can climb Dartmoor's tor-crowned steeps, traverse its rock-strewn ravines, or penetrate its trackless morasses without feeling that all around bears the stamp of "unrecorded antiquity." Whichever way one looks one sees Nature in all her rudeness, in all her might, in all her impressive grandeur.

"Nature is the engineer that fortified the heights thousands of years ago, hers are the massive walls, hers the mighty bastions, hers the granite glacis down to the roaring torrent below, hers the hand that reared those stupendous citadels, which fable might have garrisoned with demi-gods and beleaguered with Titans, whilst in the recumbent mass that guards the approach, imagination, with

scarcely an effort, might discern an Archetype and a mystic Sphinx in kindred porphyry of proportions far more colossal, and of date far more ancient than that which still looks forth in serene and lonely grandeur over the saints of the Memphian desert."

True, indeed, it is that it is only on Dartmoor itself that the graphic accuracy and poetic beauty of CARRINGTON'S descriptions can be appreciated, when with master hand he sketches the characteristic features of the scene which seems to transport one in the moment from the richly cultivated and thickly peopled provinces of England to some unexplored and desert track in the remotest regions of the globe :—

Devonians dreary Alps and now I feel
The influence of that impressive calm
That is upon them. Nothing that has life
Is visible ; no solitary flock
At wide will, ranging through the silent moors,
Breaks the deep-felt monotony ; and all
Is motionless, save where the giant shades
Flung by the passing cloud, glide slowly o'er
The grey and gloomy wild.

To get a commanding view of the grim, awful desolation of Dartmoor, one wants to ascend Yes Tor (pronounced by Devonshire people, East Tor), the highest of all the Tors.

From his elevated position the visitor will be struck with the grandness of the swelling distant outline as the rays of the sun light up the heather and moss, diversifying the dark shadows of the Tors with the different tints of green that prevail around. Severely solitary Dartmoor most certainly is, and would be, one would think, the last place where anybody would live. Yet

E'en here

Man, rude untutor'd man, has lived and left
Rude traces of existence.

Yes, in passing over Dartmoor one comes across unmistakeable evidences that human beings have taken up their abode there, and some of the remains of the ancient inhabitants are most interesting to inspect. To the thoughtful mind they are, to say the least, singularly suggestive. The Rev. SAMUEL MANNING, LL.D., and the Rev. S. G. GREEN, D.D., in one of their volumes on "English Pictures," after dwelling on the grim loneliness of Dartmoor, go on to say:—

"The slopes by which Dartmoor descends to the lowlands around are beautiful. In fact, the mighty granite mass is girdled by an investiture of fair glens and smiling villages, which make the circuit of it a succes-

sion of some of the brightest pictures that England can anywhere present in the same compass. The drive from Okehampton to Chagford, or to Moreton Hampstead, for instance, is of wonderful charm. Near the former village, the river descends over rocks and boulders in richly wooded glen, as beautiful in parts as Dovedale. The rivers indeed which come down on all sides from Dartmoor are the glory of Devonshire. Beside the Teign there is the Dart itself, one headstream of which rises near the well-known prison at Prince Town, with the Taw, Tavy, Avon, Erme, Plym, and streamlets innumerable.

“Travellers in favourable weather will do well to cross Dartmoor by the coach road from Moreton Hampstead to Tavistock, past the big, gloomy prison, appropriately placed in the very wildest and most desolate part of the whole region. Or, as we did, making Okehampton their headquarters, they may pass on by train by way of Lidford. The railway is carried in places at a great height, on the open edge of the moor, which it curiously fringes; it seems essentially a holiday line; there is no hurry, and the traveller, as he passes along, may leisurely survey the

frowning heights above, or the fair valley below, according to his choice.

“Lidford station being reached, we left the train, and found ourselves in an unfinished looking spot, with little outwardly to attract. Having, however, received directions how to proceed, we crossed a farmyard, where some cattle with stupendous horns looked and lowed at us in a manner trying to the nerves, then, emerging near a river bank, made our way for less than a mile up the stream, on a grassy path, beneath overhanging woods, when at a sudden turn up a glen that opened to the main stream, the gleam of waters caught the eye at the first glance like some tall spirit of the dell, glimmering through the foliage that enshrouded it. A more beautiful cascade is hardly to be seen in England, when Dartmoor has had abundance of rain. At other times, they say, a miller can turn on a supply of water, else thriftily economised for his needs. Happily, no such artificial arrangement was needful on the occasion of our visit; and we remained long admiring the lovely picture.”

But to return to the walk. We have still several miles to traverse before we reach our destination — Princetown. Fortunately, we

have a compass to guide us, for we now find the "guide book" of little use. Towering hills face one whichever way one turns, and now and then one comes to a piece of flat land, which is more often than not of a boggy character. Running down its rocky bed between high hills is the river Erme, the water in innumerable places falling over huge stones with great velocity and producing masses of the purest foam. By half-past four we should have reached Princetown, but it is much later than that, and alas! we know not where we are, save that we are in a maze.

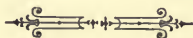
Truth will prevail. We have lost ourselves among the towering hills! Ringing in our ears are the inspiring Latin words *nil desperandum*. Neither do we despair, but on, on we push, climbing up and staggering down; not a solitary soul can we see—nothing but hills, hills, hills! Dusk will soon be coming on, and we begin seriously to think that we shall have to spend the night on wild and rugged Dartmoor. Thank goodness we have some brandy and biscuits with us. We look at the compass again; it tells us we are out of our course, and points us to another direction. We turn round, and move

onward with every speed, although even now we doubt whether we are really making for Princetown. However, we do not give in. Yet we feel that this is our last chance, for another half-hour or so and darkness will have set in, and then we shall be obliged to come to a halt. So up the hills we climb, and over the lumpy land we trod. We come across sheep; human habitation cannot be far off. My companion thinks otherwise.

We are on the top of a Tor. We stand still; we gaze around. Yes, there are two or three houses to the left, and not a mile away. The sun has disappeared behind the hills; darkness is hovering around. We look again at the houses. What if they are only Celtic remains? We drive such a thought from our minds, and are determined to get across to the buildings. But can we? Between us and the houses is a long stretch of boggy land, and of such land we have been repeatedly warned to keep clear. If we attempt to cross it we may sink in up to our waists and not be able to get out! Yet if we remain all night on Dartmoor we may perish of cold! We decide to push on. Down the hill we go, on to the bog we tread. In we sink,


but only a few inches. However, we retrace our steps and try another spot. We meet with a similar experience, but the houses—for houses we can now see they are—are not more than a quarter of a mile off, and are staring us in the face. We again attempt to cross the bog, and this time we succeed, but we get thoroughly wet. That matters very little, for we are on *terra firma* now, and in a few minutes will have reached the houses. We breathe freely again, knowing that we have escaped a night—and a cold, misty night it proved to be—on Dartmoor.

On reaching the houses we are informed that we are some two miles off Princetown, and that a road by the side of the Moor will take us to it. We return thanks for the information, and push on, and get safely to Princetown. We put up at the Duchy Hotel, where we receive every attention and comfort. After a good hot supper we chat over a blazing fire about our somewhat long and adventurous walk, and then retire for the night. How thoroughly we enjoyed our repose can be better imagined than described.





DUNSTER AND MINEHEAD.

 AMONG the many picturesque places in the West but few can surpass Dunster and Minehead in point of general attractiveness. These two places may be reached in a comparatively short time from both Bridgwater and Taunton. Only a mile or two apart, Dunster and Minehead afford one, so far as scenery is concerned, all that is requisite for an enjoyable day's outing. Situated in, perhaps, the most beautiful portion of Somerset, the two places are the delight of all tourists.

At Dunster the Castle, the seat of Mr. G. F. LUTTRELL, J.P., (and a fortress of very considerable antiquity), is a leading attraction, and if permission is procured the visitor will

thoroughly enjoy a stroll through the lovely grounds. From them some splendid scenery will meet the eye. Which-ever way one turns some fresh glory of Nature presents itself, and the farther one wanders the more charming the scenes appear to become.

It was on a perfect July day that we found ourselves at Dunster, proceeding without delay, and with eager anticipations, to the Castle grounds. Walking up the town entrance the first thing to arrest our attention is an old tower of EDWARD I's time, and then we come to an ancient gateway also said to date back to the time of EDWARD I, while a short walk farther on brings us to the terrace at the south of the Castle. Stretched out before us is a magnificent view. It needs a SALVATOR ROSA, with his pencil dipped in sunshine, to adequately depict such a scene. Out in the distance, calm as a lake and noiseless as the air, gleams

The sea, the sea, the open sea,
The ever wide, the ever free !

while on all sides and at varying distances are full-foliaged trees, adding to the picturesqueness of the undulating country with its gentle hills and brooding clouds ; and

the eye as it travels through vistas of leafy boughs, to still secluded pastures where the oxen are quietly grazing, and scans a scene so peaceful and serene, is dazzled and satisfied to a degree. Just behind us running up the side of the Castle is a fine lemon tree—a rarity in our climate—and its fruitfulness is proved by the many lemons temptingly hanging on the branches. Continuing along the terrace the next object of interest we come to is a greenhouse in which are to be seen some magnificent palms. The greenhouse occupies the spot where formerly stood the private chapel. A few more steps, and we are rewarded with a sight of a beautiful fountain, the centre piece of which is in the shape of the family crest—a swan with outspread wings. Around the fountain is a well laid out piece of ground, the border of flowers being particularly pretty.

Not far from here another grand view of the majestic sea and charming country is to be obtained, and the truth of the assertion that Nature indeed provides, without stint, the main requisites of human happiness is fully realised. Time flies, and we must not linger, so we proceed up the gently sloping path

leading to the bowling green, and an extremely pretty walk it is. Thick greenery flanks each side of the path, and now and then a good glimpse may be had of North Hill, and the beautiful country below. The best view, however, is yet to come. The bowling green is at last reached, and now we may be said to be in one of the finest positions for getting a really good view of the unique scenery around us. As for the bowling green, it is not over large, but is exceeding neat and tasteful, and has an almost circular border of trees and shrubs, while at certain corners and in suitable spots are a variety of choice plants and pretty flowers. Straight across the green, opposite to the entrance, a splendid view is obtainable right away to Dunkerry Beacon, the highest point of Exmoor. On the right is the Roman camp to which the deer park leads (the deer park by the bye contains 400 deer), then there is a large stretch of undulating country looking lovely, the thick foliage occasionally relieved with patches of gold created by the smiling corn-fields, and dotted here and there are belts of stately trees, the whole making up a picture at once delightful and impres-

sive. The temperature on this summit is most delicious. The chill of early dawn is succeeded by an agreeable warmth, and as the sunshine lights up the glorious foliage and produces a scintillation on the sea, one realises "all that the magic art of the painter or the glowing words of the poet have pictured as their ideals of terrestrial beauty."

At the south end of the bowling green is a watch tower which dates back to the time of EDWARD I, and from its interior a commanding view of the Bristol Channel is to be had. Hanging on the walls inside the tower are some ancient pictures representing the different nations of old. The tower having been inspected we descend what is known as the bowling green walk, bordering which are some very old trees, our guide pointing out a yew said to be over 600 years of age. The walk brings us to the south terrace again which the library faces, and from which a grand view is obtained of the sea, the Quantocks, and the Alabaster rocks. A move is next made to the principal entrance to the Castle, and from the terrace on the left hand side one gets a sight of a lovely landscape which baffles all description. Close

to the terrace is a cedar tree also stated to be 600 years old, and needless to say it was the cynosure of all eyes.

The castle as viewed from the principal entrance is an imposing and stately looking structure. The right part of it is after the Elizabethan style of architecture, while the left part is comparatively new, having only been erected about twenty years. A remnant of the old castle built in EDWARD III's time is within a few steps of the present castle, which came into Mr. G. F. LUTTRELL'S possession on the death of his uncle, HENRY FOWNES LUTTRELL, in 1867. Over the point of the arch are several escutcheons of the LUTTRELLS and their inter-marriages, with the family crest and motto—"Quæsitæ marte tuenda arte" (what is gained by war is to be protected by art). During the civil wars, Colonel WYNDHAM garrisoned the castle in favour of CHARLES I. WILLIAM PRYNNE, the celebrated revolutionist, was committed by the Long Parliament to imprisonment within Dunster Castle. Within recent years the castle has been restored, and the grounds have been considerably beautified; and it will be within the recollection of many of our

readers that, when the Prince of Wales visited the West for stag-hunting in 1878, he was the guest of Mr. LUTTRELL. In front of this principal entrance to the Castle, Captain LUTTRELL entered into a chat with us. He considered that that part of Somersetshire was one of the most lovely country districts in the United Kingdom. Not only did persons living in the county of Somerset say so, but people who had been in all parts and all countries. Almost every person who visited Dunster and Minehead declared he had never seen more charming scenery, and that was something of which those living in Somersetshire might well be proud. Captain LUTTRELL informed us that at the top of the hills we should find encampments which would carry us back to the times when Englishmen had not come into existence, and also encampments which would remind us of the old Roman days. He very kindly expressed a hope that we should return home having spent a pleasant and instructive outing. We thanked the gallant Captain for his courtesy and proceeded down the drive and through the village to the railway station.

A short train ride soon brought us to Minehead, where dinner was partaken of, and the remainder of the day spent. We explored the village, lounged on the sands, and rambled over the noble hills, which are well worth ascending. Once the top of the hills is gained, a scene of glorious grandeur meets the explorer's eye. The landscape is one in which sea and country are never sundered. The higher one climbs the more striking is the beauty of the sea which seems to rise as one ascends and stretch into the sky. On another side of one, down in what appears to be a large valley, are a number of miniature looking houses, surrounded by majestic trees, while corn fields add a bright colouring to the scene, the effect of which is completed by the various hills around. No one could wish to look upon a more delightful picture.

Minehead is a quaint little seaport, market town and parish, lying on the Southern shore of the Bristol Channel. It comes within the Archdeaconry of Taunton, and diocese of Bath and Wells. A curious circumstance about it is its division into three parts—Quay Town, Lower Town, and Higher Town. The first is the port, and consists of one long street

running by the side of the harbour and sea. The Lower Town contains the principal shops, hotels, and the parade, where there are some good residences and lodging houses, and a fine row of private residences called "The Parks." Higher Town includes the Church, the vicarage, and a few shops and other houses. Although a place of under two thousand inhabitants, Minehead has been singularly unfortunate with regard to fires, as many as ninety houses having been burnt down on one occasion.

In 1875 a large hotel and a terrace of lodging houses, commanding a grand view of the sea, were erected near the railway terminus, and several smart-looking residences were being built in the Avenue and Park Street last year (1889). Minehead is certainly a growing place, and increases yearly in popularity. Its picturesque situation pleases everyone, and those seeking a change of air and scene cannot do better than pay Minehead a visit. The town is lighted with gas, by a company from works situated at Quay Town, and is plentifully supplied with water, obtained from the neighbouring hills.

There are one or two very old and very interesting Churches in the town, the communion table in St. Michael's being an ancient and richly carved one. The Town Hall, for so small a place as Minehead, is a beautiful building, and here some companies of real merit give occasional performances.

In the old market place are eleven almshouses, and on the brass plate over the door of No. 5 is the following curious inscription:—"Robert Quirck, son of James Quirck, built this house, ano. 1630, and doth give into the use of the poore of this parish for ever, and for better maintenance I do give my two inner sellers at the inner ende of the key (quay), and cursed be that man that shall convert it to any other use than to the use of the poore, 1630. God's providence is my inheritance. —R.Q." We gather that the founder, by his will dated July 4, 1648, gave £200 for the support and repair of the almshouses.

As regards the harbour it is considered to be one of the best and safest in the Bristol Channel, but it seems that owing to the heavy harbour dues the trade is much restricted.

Very pleasant is a stroll along the esplanade in the evening, the cool breezes from the

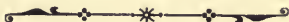
ocean being little short of "a boon and a blessing," after the warmth of the day's sun.

It is with feelings akin to sorrow and regret that we take leave of Minehead, for it has given us the best and happiest impressions.

However, at twenty minutes to nine the homeward journey is made, and the full tide and harvest moon, which can be seen for some distance through the carriage windows, provide us with further delight. Indeed the night scene is almost as charming as that of the day, and one is forcibly reminded of the lines :—

"How beautiful is night !
A dewy freshness fills the silent air ;
No mist obscures, nor cloud, nor speck, nor stain,
Breaks the serene of heaven :
In full-orb'd glory yonder moon divine
Rolls through the dark blue depths ;
Beneath her steady ray
The desert circle spreads,
Like the round ocean, girdled with the sky ;
How beautiful is night !"

All things must end, and so must a day's outing. Between ten and half-past we reach home to retain for many a day the most delightful recollections of our trip to Dunster and Minehead.





LYNTON AND LYNMOUTH.

BEAUTIFUL! beautiful!" is the verdict passed on Lynton and Lynmouth by visitors to these favourite Devonshire resorts.

The scenery they furnish is of the most sylvan and varied description.

There are fine cliffs, lovely landscapes, and charming cascades.

The country around has been very fittingly termed the "Switzerland of England," and GAINSBOROUGH once declared the neighbourhood to be "the most delightful place for a landscape painter this country can boast."

It is impossible to do justice to the great beauty of Lynton and Lynmouth, and neither the pencil of GAINSBOROUGH nor the pen of Mr. R. D. BLACKMORE, the author of that popular work, "Lorna Doone," can

adequately depict the charms of the surrounding country.

Lynton reached, one of the first places to be visited is the "Valley of Rocks." The best way to this spot is to follow the old pack road to Lynmouth for a few hundred yards, and then take the first turning on the left. This way is called the North Walk, and is pronounced to be one of the finest cliff walks in England.

A half-a-mile's walk along this path brings one to a rugged tor, which is pointed and jagged in the most extraordinary manner. This tor is the famous "Ragged Jack" and his colleagues.

A legend is connected with this grotesque group. It is to the effect that a party of junketers were dancing and making merry on a Sunday, and while in the midst of their revelry the devil suddenly appeared and turned them into stone, thus making sure of them on the spot.

A few minutes after passing "Ragged Jack" the "Castle Rock" comes in sight, and on rounding the last turn of this splendid cliff walk the whole of the grand valley bursts upon you, giving you inexpressible delight.

What is the "Castle Rock"? It is "a huge block of stone on the summit of a mountain of rocks piled one over the other in all directions." By a winding path and steps of rocks it may be quickly and safely reached, and once on top a magnificent view is obtained of the channel, cliffs and headlands. The sight surpasses all description.

The legend of the "Castle Rock" is highly interesting. This is it:—

"Once Lynton Castle was as stately a pile as any in the kingdom, though now not a stone of it remains. One dark evening in the fall of the year a monk of huge proportions and forbidding looks came to the gate of the castle and demanded hospitality in the name of the Blessed Virgin. But the lady of the house, disliking his gloomy brow, refused him admission, whereon he drew up his stalwart form to its full height, clenched his fist, and vowed, 'All that is thine shall be mine, until in the porch of Holy Church a lady and child shall stand and beckon.'

"Many years passed away, and the Church of St. John was pulled down by the Baron who succeeded to the manor of Lynton. Indeed, so great was his greed, that he even

dared to lay his sacrilegious hands on the holy vessels and relics. One night as he sat feasting and drinking out of the holy vessels, the Black Monk suddenly appeared and called him to his last account. His servants, aroused by his cries for help, rushed in from all sides, only to find their master a lifeless corpse. His only son, depressed to the verge of madness by the awful doom which hung over his house, took up the cross, buckled on his sword and journeyed to Palestine, where he did mighty deeds against the Saracens. But go where he would the Black Monk was always his companion, and never left his side night or day; and, alas! the wine pot and the smiles of women soon drew him from the path of right-doing and knightly deeds. Sad indeed were the hearts of mother and sister when the evil tidings reached them in the lone Castle of Lynton, and it was a happy release for them when the reaper Death brought them the repose they so ardently longed for. In time the knight returned to Devonshire, and passing through the valley on a still quiet Sabbath morning, and hearing the church bells, like a call from heaven, on the balmy air of early summer, the memories

of his innocent childhood came upon him with resistless force, awaking in his sorrowing heart the holy feelings of long bygone days. In vain the Black Monk tried to lure him from the sacred fane, speaking to him of bright eyes and vales of delight. He paused but a moment, for in the distant porch stood his mother and sister, luminous with angelic light, a glory round the head of each. Heavenly music filled the air as they lifted up their spirit hands and beckoned. The knight rushed from the evil presence of the Black Monk, exclaiming, 'I come! I come! Mother, Sister, I am saved! O God, have mercy upon me!' And the three were taken up in a cloud of light, while angel voices were heard in the air praising God and rejoicing over a sinner who was saved.

"The Black Monk stood an impotent witness to the loss of his prey, and then hurled himself headlong down the gloomy depths of the abyss beneath. A mighty earthquake rent the ground in all directions, the castle fell to pieces and vanished, huge rocks were heaved up on all sides, and the 'Valley of Rocks' was left as an everlasting witness of this convulsion of nature."

Lee Abbey, the seat of Mr. C. F. BAILEY, Lee Bay, and Smuggler's Leap are other places of great attraction, but, perhaps, more charming than all these is Woody Bay—a spot which gains its name from being surrounded with woods. Abundant verdure prevails here, and even the steep cliffs are clothed with it.

A pretty streamlet wends its way through the woods, and finally runs over the edge of the cliff, making a delightful waterfall. If the weather is fine the pleasantest way to get to Woody Bay is by boat from Lynmouth—a distance of some three miles. The scenery *en route* is of a very charming character.

Watersmeet, which forms the frontispiece of this book, is beyond doubt one of the grandest features of Lynton, and no one who sees it ever comes away dissatisfied.

The prettiest way to Watersmeet is, says Mr. W. RIDDELL, of Lynmouth, through the woods on the east side of the river. Leaving Lynmouth and taking the road past the Lyndale Hotel and Church of St. John, the end of the village in this direction is soon reached. “Ascending a short hill,” proceeds

Mr. RIDDELL, "and taking the path to the left you will arrive at the little hamlet of Middleham."

Mr. RIDDELL gives such a good description of the spot that we feel we cannot do better than give his own words :—"Passing through this quaint little place (of Middleham) and following the path by the side of the river for a short distance, you come to a rustic bridge ; crossing this you are now fairly in the direct path to Watersmeet. The rock spring, one hundred yards below the bridge, is celebrated for its icy coldness and the exceeding purity of its water.

"Following the path through the woods, past many a deep pool and rushing waterfall, we before long reach the foot of a little hill where the path divides. The one going straight up the hill is the old path now unused and almost impassable. Taking the lower path brings you to a wooded hollow with a small streamlet flowing through it. This delightfully shady spot obtained the name of ' Umbrella Corner ' a few years ago from the number of artists who chose this favourite point of view for painting Vellacot's Pool.

“This short legend is attached to the pool :—A certain Farmer Vellacot of Lyn had been carousing at the ‘Blue Ball’ Countisbury, till a late hour, and in returning home he missed his way, and instead of crossing the river by the stone bridge below Watersmeet, strayed with uneven steps and many a tumble to the spot we are now writing about. Coming suddenly to the edge of the steep rocks which border the pool, he fell in headlong before he had time to ascertain the danger of his position. His hat, jammed between two rocks, was found next day and led to the pool being dragged and his body recovered.

“Following the path which winds along by the side of the river for about three-quarters of a mile, opening new scenes of beauty at every turn, you come to a stone bridge which is just below Watersmeet. Here there is a path on either side of the river, but it is best to cross the bridge and proceed up the west side till a wooden bridge is gained, immediately above which the far-famed Watersmeet is seen. It is well to wander about in the woods and glens on either side. The smaller stream to the west is very

beautiful, and is full of lovely bits as far as 'Ilsford Bridges' (half-a-mile).

"Taking the path from Watersmeet Cottage up the East Valley the first 100 yards leads you up a steep ascent. There are many fine peeps of the river beneath till it and the path are once more side by side. At the first turn a large deep pool will be found. This is 'Stag Pool,' so called in consequence of a stag having been killed here some years ago. The path now runs by the side of the stream through some grand wood and river scenery till Wiltsham plains are reached, an open spot of ground covered with furze. At the far end of the plains you again enter the woods, and a short walk brings you to a branch path leading down to 'Long Pool.' This is a long dark rocky pool down in the ever-shady woods, than which nothing finer can be found in the beautiful West Country. Standing at the lower end and looking up stream, the effect of bright sunlight glancing through the trees on the fall at the higher end, and the deep cool shadows on the pool itself are truly glorious. Shortly after leaving 'Long Pool,' the picturesque little hamlet of 'Rockford' comes in view. Here the river is crossed by

a rustic wooden bridge which leads you to the Rockford Inn, a comfortable little hostel where the tourist is glad to rest."

As for Lynmouth, it is a wonderfully pretty village, and basks in beautiful scenery.

All the approaches, from whatever point, save from the sea, lie across desolate regions, "so that no previous intimation is given of the enchanting scenes that burst upon the traveller as he descends Lynton or Countisbury Hill."

Lynmouth is a place where many happy hours may be spent, and one cannot visit it without feeling all the brighter and better for having done so.





PORLOCK TO DULVERTON.

IN the “far West” of the County of Somerset, and touching the confines of Devon, we have the third of that series of hills—the Mendips, the Quantocks, and Exmoor—which give to the County its chief characteristics, and supply its most charming scenery.

But of the three, despite the world wide reputation given to the Mendips by the magnificent Cheddar gorge, and despite the lovely combes and valleys which flank the Quantocks, the recollections and associations of Exmoor have a more permanent and abiding place in our thoughts.

More extensive, and more diversified in attraction, the wilds of Exmoor have many charms for many minds. To the huntsman it is especially dear as being the last

home in England of the wild red deer, and as affording fullest measure of that excitement and enjoyment particular to the lover of the chase.

The pedestrian treads its slopes with loving step, for amid and beyond a thousand minute beauties of form and colour lie in panorama some of the most magnificent views the West of England can afford.

From the Quantocks, and beyond a wide stretch of woodland and pastoral country, the heights of Exmoor are indicated only by the blue line that distance gives.

Descending into the valley, however, and passing through the quaint little town of Dunster, and more modern seaside resort of Minehead, we leave behind the Quantocks and commence to get a closer acquaintance with the subject of our sketch.

Approaching Porlock from Minehead, through the Selworthy Woods, we obtain some idea of the height and grandeur of great Dunkery—monarch of the Western hills.

Its ascent being very gradual, and the summit the crowning point of what is already a high level, its height can only be

appreciated from a few points, and those at some distance.

One of the best of these points is undoubtedly by the Selworthy Woods from Minehead, from whence we see on the left the vast and rugged mass rearing its head against the sky. The sight is particularly impressive in the evening hour when the shadows begin to lengthen, and the hollows are filled with sombre depths, making the scene always grand—grander by the sense of greater solitude.

Porlock, "far from the madding crowd," unstartled by the shriek of locomotive, and its people of a naïve and pleasant simplicity, is the delight of the genuine lover of nature.

In its neighbourhood are to be found a combination of charms seldom to be met with. Cliff scenery so rich as to give us a rare foretaste of the delights of North Devon, with a sea dancing in the sunlight and forming a mirror of exquisite colour, woodland walks and limpid stream, deep and silent woods of fir, and the wild and solitary hills.

For the romantic the picturesque little village has material in plenty for the fancy

to run riot over, for within easy distance is the celebrated Doone Valley, immortalised by that most charming and sympathetic describer of nature, R. D. BLACKMORE, and from whence the great JAN RIDD obtained his bride.

That quaint old hostelry, "The Ship," must not be forgotten. Here in the chimney corner, where SOUTHEY sat long years ago, we may gather from the courteous landlady many an anecdote of interest of the celebrated Hunting Parson "JACK RUSSELL," and other celebrities.

Not one of the least of the many charming walks in the vicinity of Porlock is that to Culbone Cove along the cliffs, a distance of some three miles. Here on all sides, save that which opens upon the sea, we have woods of fir rising almost perpendicularly a height of 1200 feet, and in the little valley between their bases has been built a church, *said* to be the smallest complete parish church in England. It is certainly very small, and would probably not seat more than a dozen worshippers, whilst it is completely furnished with chancel, nave, turret, porch, and bell.

Leaving Porlock we commence, almost at once, the four miles climb which brings us to the summit of Dunkery. The direct road lies through the village of Stoke Pero, but to the hardy, the way through Horner Wood will be found more pleasant.

Many and oft amid the beauties of this sylvan retreat have echoed the cry of huntsmen in pursuit of their prey, and with the waters of the stream which tumble down its centre has mingled the blood of many a noble stag, making there its last stand for liberty and life.

This wood reaches some distance up the slope of the hill, and when the end is reached a few hundred feet of sturdy climbing through the heather will find us on one of the highest points in the West of England.

And if the day is clear, how well have we been repaid our climb, for the scene which meets the eye can scarcely be excelled.

To the north across the Bristol Channel we see the Welsh Coast, and the distant Welsh Hills, with Berkeley and Raglan Castles, whilst farther to the north east the fainter blue indicates the Malverns. To the east the range of view covers the fertile vale

backed by the Quantocks. On the west we have the beautiful North Devon scenery, and in the far distance the broad Atlantic. Whilst to the South our vision is only bounded by Exmoor's great rival—Dartmoor. If our visit be in the early Autumn, we are doubly repaid our climb, for below and around us on every side lie vast stretches of heather in full flower. Here and there the heather will be broken by a mass of fern turning colour with advancing age, and the whole gives a rich blending of purple and gold.

When we have feasted our eyes on this rare scenic treat, we bend our steps towards the South, and shortly reach the village of Exford, the headquarters of the Devon and Somerset Staghounds. About three miles from Exford we touch the Barle at Withypool: This is one of the many lovely rivers with which the West abound, and if one winds with its stream to Dulverton—although it doubles the distance—he will reap a rich harvest of delight.

RICHARD JEFFRIES, when residing on the Quantocks shortly before his death, visited the beautiful wooded valley through which

the river runs to Dulverton, and in an article in the "English Illustrated Magazine," in language such as he could only use, describes what he affectionately calls the "brown beautiful Barle."

From Withypool to Dulverton, a distance of some sixteen miles, the river meanders among the hills, embowered the whole distance in foliage, and the eye is constantly being charmed with some new peep of beauty.

So little is this lovely spot known, that one may walk almost the whole distance without meeting a human being. Perhaps the best time of the year to explore the valley is the month of June. Then the trees have burst into a new garniture of green, and the whole animal and vegetable kingdoms waking anew under the genial warmth of summer are enjoying life to the full.

To the botanist a wide and fruitful field of exploration is opened; the entomologist will find its resources unbounded. Here each will be rewarded with many rare specimens of the myriad and wonderful forms of plant and insect life. The skilful angler, too, will not cast his fly in vain on the clear brown stream.

Between Withypool and Dulverton are the "Hawkridge Steps," a rough bridge across the river, formed of huge slabs of stone. The bridge has existed from time immemorial and its origin is locally ascribed to the agency of the Devil.

We wind by the river some five miles or so after leaving the primitive and interesting structure, when suddenly, on our left, we find the outskirts of the town of Dulverton. Here the Barle unites with and merges its existence in the Exe—another of those beautiful streams which find their birth amongst the wild heights of Exmoor, and the exploration of which will afford the lover of nature some of the most delightful recollections of a lifetime.





BIDEFORD AND CLOVELLY.

SOMEWHERE we have read that a British nobleman “travelling abroad” was so impressed with the grandness of a certain scene that he exclaimed, “Surely there is no other view like this in the world !”

“I am told, my lord,” said the guide, “that there is but one”—mentioning a view in Scotland.

“Why,” replied the nobleman, “that is on my own estate, and I have never seen it !”

Doubtful as the anecdote may be historically, yet the idea it conveys is a very true one. The number of English people acquainted

with the beauties of their own country is comparatively small, and when one visits such a spot as Clovelly one wonders how it is that so charming a place is unknown save to a limited number of persons.

A good way of getting to Clovelly is by going by train to Bideford, and from thence taking coach ; the distance is about twelve miles, and the drive is very pleasant.

One lovely summer day we found ourselves at this last named place, and before starting for Clovelly we make a quick perambulation of the town.

Bideford is the largest town in North Devon, is over 200 miles from London, forty-four from Plymouth, and twenty-nine from Exeter. It is an incorporated town of about 14,000 inhabitants, and is a centre from which several delightful tours may be made.

From what we can gather, the very early history of Bideford is involved in obscurity, but it may interest the readers of this book to know that of old the townspeople engaged themselves so eagerly in the Newfoundland fishery and American trade that Bideford was incorporated by Queen Elizabeth in 1610; that as late as 1699 more ships belonged

to the port than to any other in the Kingdom, London and Topsham only excepted; and that the last three sufferers for witchcraft were inhabitants of Bideford. They were burnt at Exeter on August 25th, 1682, a year before the statutes which provided for their execution were repealed.

The curious old bridge spanning the wide river is one of the first things that attracts the visitor's attention on leaving the Bideford railway station. The bridge consists of twenty-four arches, and was built in the middle of the fourteenth century by voluntary subscriptions, raised chiefly through the exertions of Sir THEOBOLD GRENVILLE. The bridge, we are told, was considered of such importance to the town that many persons left lands for its support, and the trustees were in the habit of dining together when they met to transact the business connected with its maintenance, and actually kept a wine-cellar for use on such occasions. A lucky thing there was no Local Government Board in those days!

As regards the scenery in which Bideford is seated, CHARLES KINGSLEY thus describes it in his "Westward Ho!":—

“All who have travelled through the delicious scenery of North Devon, must needs know the little white town of Bideford, which slopes upwards from its broad tide-river, paved with yellow sands, and its many-arched old bridge, where salmon wait for autumn floods, towards the pleasant upland on the West. Above the town the hills close in, cushioned with deep oak woods, through which juts here and there a crag of fern-fringed slate; below they lower, and open more and more in softly-rounded knolls and fertile squares of red and green, till they sink into the wide expanse of hazy flats, rich salt marshes, and rolling sand hills, where Torridge joins her sister Taw, and both together flow quietly towards the broad surges of the bar and the everlasting thunder of the long Atlantic swell.”

Among the several places of interest in the town is the Parish Church, which was consecrated by Bishop BRONSCOMBE in November, 1259. It contains some very fine stained glass windows, numerous mural tablets, and attractive monuments. The Churchyard has been tastefully laid out as a garden, but equally as interesting as the flowers are the

curious epitaphs inscribed on several of the gravestones. The tower has eight bells, on one of which runs the couplet:—

I to the Church the living call ;
And to the grave I summon all.

If you have time you should certainly make an effort to visit the remains of Chudleigh Fort, built by Major-General CHUDLEIGH at the outbreak of the Rebellion. The Fort stands on the top of a hill to the east of the town, and “commands a splendid landscape.”

We have missed the early coach to Clovelly, and another does not start till four o'clock, and, worse still, for us, does not return till the next day. Our object is to get to Clovelly and back the same day, so that we can start for Barnstaple the following morning, and catch the coach to Lynton and Lynmouth. The landlord at the hotel (Tanton's) we put up at sees our difficulty, and in way of solving it proposes that we should order a special carriage, and thus be enabled to return from Clovelly the same evening. We accept his proposition, and while the carriage is being got ready we partake of a somewhat hasty meal.

There are a few minutes to wait before the meal is brought up, and we occupy the spare moments by looking at the visitors' book. Names of well-known persons figure in it, and here and there one comes across a piece of poetry that somebody delighted with the neighbourhood has been constrained to pen.

The meal over and our carriage ready, we hurry on to Clovelly. The road is a fairly good one, but the scenery *en route* is not particularly striking, although now and again a good view presents itself.

We pass by several gentlemen's places, including Ford, the seat of Admiral Sir WILLIAM DOWAL, and Moreton Park—a fine estate—the home of Sir GEORGE TUCKLEY, Bart., who is now “grey with age.”

Then we come to a village, and leaving it pass through an avenue of oaks and firs. Emerging from the avenue we have hedges studded with a choice profusion of ferns and wild flowers, lining either side of the road, while all around, rising like giants from the ground, are noble hills.

Several pretty hamlets are passed through, and when a mile or two by Hoops Inn (the

half-way house) some lovely views of the sea meet the eye. Over stretches of well-cultivated land, with belts of thick foliaged trees standing here and there, and between sloping hills, one gets delightful peeps of the blue water and the silent craft slowly sailing thereon. But wait till you get to the Hobby drive, for then you are brought face to face with scenes so striking and sublime as to send a thrill of rapture through your veins.

The Hobby grounds are now soon reached. They are the private property of Mr. HAMLYN, of Clovelly Court, but for a shilling and sixpence he very kindly permits visitors to drive through them.

Taking our coachman's advice, we decide to proceed through the grounds, and before we have been in them two minutes we are heartily glad we went no other way.

The drive is three miles long, winding in and out, zig-zag fashion, and is carried along the face of a cliff.

A beautiful avenue of trees is the noticeable feature of the first portion of the drive. Down on the right, some 200 feet below us, stretches a well-wooded glen, bright with luxuriant

foliage, while on the left the bank towers aloft carpeted with moss, and adorned with flowers, ferns, and trees of every variety.

The Italian sky is hidden from view by the overhanging network of delicately tinted foliage, but where the sun finds his way through the leaves causing them to glitter, the effect is most pretty.

The air is loaded with fragrance, and a gentle breeze pervades the place.

After proceeding a hundred yards or so the carriage stops. Our attention is called to a view on the right. Through a mass of rich foliage rising gradually up to the very sky we get a sight of Gallantry Bower—a fine cliff extending into the sea, of which only a small but delightful portion is seen. The view is beautiful indeed, but presently we get a better one still.

A few more minutes and the carriage again stops. We are confronted with a glorious scene.

On our left are numerous trees rearing themselves loftily above, with foliage flowing from their boughs like showers of golden rain from a pyrotechnic piece, while down on our right is the lazy glen, and in front of us

another cloud of foliage as lovely as one could wish to look upon. Turning slightly to the right and glancing over the glimmering glen we get a fascinating view of the ocean between rising hills.

In some spots the sea is beautifully blue and in others grandly green. Yonder, too, are the cliffs clothed with verdure to the edge, and bedecked with wild flowers, that pass a pleasant summer time,

Rocked by breezes, touched by tender light,
Fed by dews and sung to by the sea.

And one also gets a glimpse of Woolacombe Bay and sands, Morte Point, and Morte Bay.

Truly the scene is supremely splendid, and we gaze in admiration on it. The sight presented is what an æsthetically-disposed spectator might call "a poem of exquisite sentiment and beauty." So captivating is the picture that we nearly lose ourselves in a state of beautiful bewilderment. Verily, Aladdin on seeing his Palace could not have been more wonderstruck and charmed.

Rarely is such a rich feast prepared by Nature for the eye. Rarely does a scene so stir the soul and fill it with such ecstasies. It makes one repeat the words of a great

king who, on being conducted to a lovely rural spot, was so delighted with it that he exclaimed, "If there is a Paradise on earth, then surely this is it."

The coachman told us that he had driven several great travellers through these grounds, and they had all been unanimous in declaring that the scenes to be had from them were the most charming they had ever witnessed.

Along the drive we proceed, now passing under bending trees whose pendulous sprays sometimes nearly sweep away our hats, and now over rustic bridges through which silvery streams splash and dash on their downward course.

A succession of splendid scenes meets our eyes, each scene seemingly surpassing the other, and filling us with rapture.

A minute or two more and we have come to the end of the drive. We are on the top of a high cliff, and there at the bottom lies Clovelly—charming, captivating Clovelly!

It is not a large, imposing town; oh, no! It does not boast of fifteen or twenty thousand inhabitants; oh, no! Its inhabitants are not of the educated, genteel class; oh, no!

The very charm of Clovelly lies in its not

possessing these qualities. It is, indeed, the absence of these qualities that makes Clovelly so different from other watering-places, and has singled it out as one of the most unique spots to be anywhere found.

Clovelly is a curiously constructed village, its main street being a little wider than an ordinary pathway. Houses run down on either side—run down is literally correct, for the thoroughfare, which is paved with stones, slopes right to the beach. Two people standing in houses opposite one another could very nearly shake hands across the street.

Hackneyed as the quotation is, we give the following description of Clovelly by CHARLES KINGSLEY, because it is such an accurate one:—

“Take the steepest hillside with which you are acquainted; let the Atlantic roll at its base; cover it with ancient trees and tangled undergrowth to its summit; suppose a brawling stream to fall in a deep and narrow channel from the heights to the shore; in your mind’s eye people its banks with a straggling village of irregularly shaped lichen-covered cottages, on so sharp an incline that the base of the one is on a level with the

roof of its neighbour; pave the street with miniature boulders from the shore, arranged in a series of terraces; and terminate the descent by an antique pier of wave-worn stones, from which the only approach to the sea at low water is by ladders, whose perpendicular depths may well startle the inexperienced traveller; and then you will obtain something which would resemble Clovelly, if it were not indeed unique in its singular construction and beauty, and did not surpass all descriptive powers, whether of pen or pencil."

Clovelly has only about five hundred inhabitants, who, for the most part, gain their livelihood by fishing. The people are very respectful, and enjoy the reputation of being most moral and God-fearing.

There are one or two very good Inns in the place, the New Inn and the Red Lion being the best. The food supplied is excellent, and the charges on the whole moderate.

We patronise the former Inn, where a special attraction is to be found in the antique china that is on view. How delighted, we thought, Mr. GLADSTONE would be to examine it.

We have the pleasure of being waited upon by the daughter of the proprietor, and if anybody wants to see in the flesh one of those ideal girls with golden hair and speaking eyes that we read about in novels but rarely meet, we advise the person to pay a visit to the New Inn, Clovelly.

Seldom have we seen a more winsome little miss. About sixteen years of age, with rich golden hair, falling down her back in silken folds, and with eyes perpetually twinkling, the pretty miss is a source of pleasure to all visitors, for her manners are not proud and haughty, but simple and winning.

In glancing through one of the visitors' books we find that Clovelly had been patronised by several people of distinction. Not a few of the pages contained pieces of poetry—well, *poetry* we'll call it—and here is a verse that will be read with interest :—

Clovelly
I tell ye
Is a very remarkable, queer little town,
One might sing all day long
The children's song,
“Here we go up, up, up, and there you go down, down,
down!”
So strangely uphill and down-delly
Is this quaint little town of Clovelly.

The stone pier ought certainly to be visited. It was constructed by Mr. GEORGE CARY, whose family held the manor so far back as the reign of RICHARD II, and it commands one of the finest views of the coast it is possible to get. From it the visitor may witness (in the season) the landing of the great cargoes of herring and mackerel for which the Clovelly fishing boats are so noted, and it is said that no one knows better how to cook the former fish than the Clovelly women.

Amusements and entertainments are foreign to Clovelly, save those which the natural charms of the place afford. No, the visitor must not expect to find concerts and ordinary entertainments at Clovelly. They are practically unknown there. The time can be passed far more pleasantly without them.

“Idling in the sunshine—lounging about the streets or on the pier—lying prone on the beach or the green-sward—bathing, fishing, and sailing over the surface of the bay—or making long excursions in the neighbourhood—with a visit to the little reading-room, and a quiet ‘rubber,’ or a game at chess, draughts, or backgammon, when the rain forbids outdoor

enjoyments—in one or other of these ways a sojourn in Clovelly is passed away. ‘And very health-giving and pleasant ways they are,’ will be the verdict of any one who has tried them.”

There are several spots full of interest in the vicinity of Clovelly that should be visited, including Gallantry Bower, Mill Mouth, Lundy Island, and Hartland Point. These will not fail to afford considerable pleasure to the visitor, who will be charmed with the various attractions they offer.

To Lundy Island an especial historical interest is attached, for in early days it was the scene of events that left their mark in the history of the West country. Its secluded and almost inaccessible position has caused the Island to be coveted as a stronghold by many persons, not infrequently by the Crown, and often by those who opposed its authority. In early days pirates made the Island their headquarters, and students of English history will doubtless call to mind the story that in the reign of HENRY III, Sir WILLIAM DE MARISCO, after failing in his attempt to take the life of the King at Woodstock, in the year 1238, fled to Lundy

Island, became a pirate, and built himself a castle, but was ultimately captured and executed, together with sixteen of his accomplices.

It was at Lundy Island, too, that EDWARD II "endeavoured to shelter himself from his troublesome wife and rebellious barons," but being driven out of his course in the Channel by gales was unable to make a landing.

The Island is about three miles in length and a mile in breadth, and is largely composed of granite. So admirably adapted for building purposes is the stone that a few years ago a company was formed at Bristol with a view of carrying on a business with it, but we are told that the difficulties of working it were so formidable that the idea had to be abandoned. It is interesting to know, however, that the Thames Embankment and a few public buildings have been erected with some of the Lundy Island granite.

From Messrs. TWISS & SON'S "Illustrated Guide to North Devon" we learn that "In the early part of the seventeenth century it was reported that a couple of Turkish pirates had captured Lundy and were threatening

to burn and destroy Ilfracombe; and later a squadron of Spanish 'shippes' attempted landing, but were repulsed by the inhabitants. Later in the same century French privateers, making Lundy their head-quarters, did a deal of mischief on the adjacent coast and amongst the shipping of the Channel. It was in 1630 that the Captain of a man-of-war wrote to Cecil: 'Egypt was never more infested by caterpillars than the Channel with Biscayers.' On the 23rd of this month (June) there came out of San Sebastian twenty sail of sloops: some attempted to land on Lundy, but were repulsed by the inhabitants. In 1632 a noted pirate, Captain NUTT, the dread of all mariners navigating the Bristol Channel, made Lundy his head-quarters. In 1633 a Spanish man-of-war landing eighty men rifled the Island of everything valuable that could be carried away. In consequence of all these troubles it was determined by CHARLES I. to appoint a governor, and THOMAS BUSHEL, then engaged in working the Combmartin silver mines, was appointed. BUSHEL fortified the Island at his own cost, and on its surrender being demanded by Lord SAY and SEALE, a

noted Commonwealth man, to whom it had been granted by Parliament, refused to give it up or pay the £3,000 which SAY and SEALE demanded.

“It was finally surrendered by BUSHEL to the Hon. RICHARD FIENNES, the representative of Parliament, and he returned to the working of the Combmartin mines. In the reign of WILLIAM III, an armed vessel, pretending to be Dutch, but in reality French, seized the Island by stratagem and rifled the inhabitants of everything of value, even their clothing. This proves that Lundy has been the scene of stirring events in remote days, but is now peopled by those engaged in more peaceful and useful employments. In or about 1780 Lundy was purchased by Sir JOHN BORLASE WARREN, Baronet, who established an Irish colony there. It was afterwards sold to Sir ROBERT PALK, and by him transferred to JOHN CLEVELAND, Esq., of Tapley, near Bideford. In 1794 it was owned by Sir VERE HUNT, afterwards by Messrs. STIFF and MCTREVOR, and is now the property of the Rev. W. H. HEAVEN.”

The guide goes on to say that “the cliffs

of the Island are rugged and precipitous, accessible only to the myriads of sea fowl, who make them their abiding place. Of these birds, there are many varieties to be found on Lundy, of which the most numerous are the common gull, herring gull, gannets, cormorants, guillemots, razor bills, the puffin—locally known as the ‘Lundy parrot’—and many others whose happy fishing grounds are the blue waters that surround their island home. The botanist will find much to interest him on Lundy, as there are not less than 250 different species of wild flowers, and nineteen of ferns, to be found there.

“The rare occurrence of frosts and the more uniform temperature than that of the mainland, favour the growth of many cultivated plants. For instance, fuchsias grow luxuriantly, the hydrangea attains a height of several feet, whilst the mesembryanthemum passes through the winter unscathed. At the beginning of the winter season Lundy is visited by the migratory woodcock, and there is good snipe shooting, for which permission must be obtained of the owner. Lundy for electoral purposes is in the

Barnstaple or North-Western Division of Devon, and parochially in the hundred of Braunton. It is telegraphically in communication with the mainland by means of a submarine cable, and there is a signal station in connection with Cardiff Chamber of Commerce for the purpose of reporting inward, outward, or weather-bound vessels. Lobsters and other shell fish are plentiful about the rocks."

In the cool of the evening we commence our homeward journey. When about three parts way to Bideford we branch off the Hartland Road for the pretty village of Abbotsham, which is soon reached. The Post Office looks fresh and fine with its floral decorations, while the old Church nearly opposite takes one's mind back to the Middle Ages.

Standing nearly in the centre of the road is an oak between two and three hundred years old. It is strangely shaped, having nothing but a bunch of foliage at the top of its canker-eaten trunk.

The shades of evening are fast falling, and the country is being wrapt in a mantle of tender darkness.

We are not now long reaching Bideford,
and when we do daylight has entirely dis-
appeared, and reigning in its stead is night,
and a lovely night it is.

With ebon wand and sable robe,
How beautiful, Night, art thou ;
Serenely set on a throne of jet,
With stars about thy brow !





GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF WEST COUNTRY SCENERY.

FROM the foregoing sketches it will be observed that the West country possesses scenery as varied and diversified as it is striking and beautiful.

No matter what part of the West you may visit, you will be sure to find something that will interest and, probably, captivate.

In no other part of England is such a wealth of scenery offered to the visitor, and in no other part of England can a holiday be more enjoyably spent. Nature seems to have doubly favoured the West country, on which it has lavished with a

prodigal hand charms and beauties that need to be seen to be believed and appreciated.

Nature in the West adopts many manners and many forms. But all of them are grand and attractive.

At Cheddar, in North Somerset, we get Nature in the form of noble cliffs, mighty rocks, and remarkable caves; in other parts of Somerset she displays herself in undulating countryland, studded here and there with sylvan scenes, some of which are enhanced by their close proximity to the beautiful sea; while in Devon, Nature smiles, perhaps, in her most seductive mood.

In Cornwall, too, she presents herself in a variety of ways alike elevating and picturesque. A walk along the Cornish coast will bring one, it is said, face to face with a panorama of some of the finest possible cliff and ocean scenery, while an inland walking tour will reveal some peculiarly pleasing pictures.

It is very questionable whether any more lovely scenery than that of the West of England is to be anywhere found, and if

we may believe great travellers, some of the scenery that adorns the West country stands absolutely unrivalled.

ROBERT SOUTHEY, writing of his walk through Lynmouth, declared the place to be the finest spot, except Cintra and the Arrabida, that he ever saw, and other eminent men have affirmed that the West country contains some of the most exquisite scenery they ever beheld. Of course there are flat, uninteresting spots in the West, but even they are like angels' visits—few and far between. What strikes one most forcibly about the scenery of the West is the wealth and richness of the foliage, the variety of its tints, and the wonderfully pretty and diversified forms it takes. This is the more noticeable in the well-wooded combes and glorious glens which are such a feature of Western scenery, and such a delight to all Nature-loving visitors.

Another point about the Western scenery that impresses one is the charming combination of country and sea views—a combination seldom to be met with. Indeed, at some places the scenes offered by the sea in front and the country at the back,

run one another so closely that it is difficult to say which carry off the palm.

The Western watering-places, so quaint, so romantic, so picturesque, are most decidedly an important characteristic of West of England scenery, and are a refreshing retreat from the toil and turmoil of everyday life. Then, of course, there are the ranges of hills for which the West country is noted, and these constitute another leading characteristic of Western scenery. Without them the West country would be deprived of one of its great attractions, for not only do they serve as a spectacular effect, but they offer the most bracing and pleasurable walks imaginable.

In the West our constant taste for variety in nature is never left unsatisfied. You can scarcely walk a mile without new pleasures delighting your senses or imagination. Nature is full of variety, full of beauties, and seems to labour on every side to surprise us with new pleasures. As a clever writer puts it, we must be blind and senseless indeed if we are not struck with this infinite variety, and if we do not acknowledge the wisdom and goodness of the Creator.

Nature, with a tender regard for our taste, presents us with nothing that does not please and interest us. The very earth is clothed in green—the colour most agreeable to the eye, and in the West country that colour is made all the more charming by the variety of its tints and by the lovely light and shade that play upon it.

Landscapes covered with woods, brambles, flowers, and grass afford us beautiful pictures, the beautifulness being enhanced by the infinitely varied tints of green crossing and intersecting each other, and blending themselves so as to be insensibly melted into each other. There is no want of harmony or tone, but an exquisite blending of colour.

Not a month passes but different plants and flowers spring up and invite attention. The vegetable kingdom is never at a standstill. It is always producing something fresh for us. "If anyone asks, To whom are we indebted for all these blessings? the hills and the valleys will tell them; the earth points it to their sight; the sky is a glass in which they may behold it; the thunder, the rain, and the rainbow declare the wisdom of God. All things in Nature bear the impression of His

handywork. The birds, with their melodious notes, celebrate Him. The bounding flocks, and the stag in the midst of the forest ; the insignificant worm and the enormous whale that spouts the waves to the sky and sinks large ships ; the terrible crocodile, and that moving mountain, the majestic elephant ; all the numerous hosts of animals which people the air, the earth, and the sea ; they all declare the glory of God, and proclaim His existence."

The time to visit the West is really in the months of May and June, when Nature is adorned in her tenderest and sweetest garb. Then it is that the birds are in full chorus ; then it is that the scenery is the freshest, the lanes most lovely, and the hedgerow and field bright with bud and flower. Then it is, too, "that we can fully appreciate that exquisite idea of the old Greeks in regarding the earth as our 'nourishing mother,' and of the poetic pathos of their rendering back again their blessed dead to her breast, as we would gently lay a weary and sleeping child back into a mother's enfolding arms."

Ah, and what a beautiful blue fills the sky, what a rich purple and gold glorifies

the west as the sun sinks in the evening, "a glowing, golden disc, like the shield of one of Milton's archangels," and what glad harmony exists all around! Wonderful Nature! Wonderful Nature! And yet some people declare the world to be dull and devoid of attraction. They pine for a better world to come, knowing nothing of the beauties of this.

Sir ARTHUR HELPS has well said, "What! dull, when you do not know what gives its loveliness of form to the lily, its depth of colour to the violet, its fragrance to the rose; when you do not know in what consists the venom of the adder, any more than you can imitate the glad movements of the dove. What! dull, when earth, air, and water are all alike mysteries to you, and when as you stretch out your hand you do not touch anything the properties of which you have mastered; while all the time Nature is inviting you to talk earnestly with her, to understand her, to subdue her, and to be blessed by her! Go away, man; learn something, do something, understand something, and let me hear no more of your dullness."

Yes, it is in the West country that Nature is to be seen in her most charming and loving of moods. There her soothing influences are felt by cultured and uncultured alike. No one can wholly resist the seductive spell of her gentle smiles. No one can entirely ignore her pleasant presence. Consciously or unconsciously, we all in a greater or less degree admire her. She waves a wand of irresistible charm about us, and more or less refines and elevates our feelings.

Truly, thousands have felt, and are feeling, all the better for having experienced a "touch of that hallowing influence which GRAY felt in all its sacred fulness, when spell-bound by the gentle beauties of Stoke Pogis Churchyard he sung those immortal words":—

Hark how the sacred calm that breathes around,
Bids every fierce tumultuous passion cease,
In still small accents whispering from the ground,
A grateful earnest of eternal peace.



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